

MISSION TO MIHAILOVIC

by

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81-815R
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FOREWORD

On July 1, 1943 I arrived in Cairo after 97 days at sea from New York to Suez, most of the time dodging submarines who had located us as we rounded Cape Horn and dogged our tracks to the Mozambique Channel.

Although a member of a Civil Affairs Team, I believed training at West Point and in the Royal North West Mounted Police fitted me for combat, which I proposed to get.

In Cairo I ran into Colonel Gustav Gunther, later killed in the V bomb destruction of the Grenadier Guards Chapel in London, who mentioned a possible assignment with the Office of Strategic Services under General William J. (Wild Bill) Donovan.

It was my chance. General Donovan was a legendary figure as a fighter. His courage was attested to by the Congressional Medal of Honor he wore. His operational wizardry and resourcefulness were beginning to bring fame to his organization.

Herein is inscribed the plain, unvarnished account of the experiences of an American officer with the Office of Strategic Services during a six month's period in the fastnesses of the Serbian people. Its locale is Serbia, the no-man's land of the Sandzak and the mountains of Montenegro.

While we saw and observed many Croatians, Slovenians and Dalmatians, both with Mihailovic and the Partizans, the living force and effect of this work is Serbia and the Serbians. Its purpose is to give you an understanding of these rugged, virile people and to plead for tolerance in the present agony of terror and bloodshed being visited upon them.

My mission to Yugoslavia was for the purpose of reporting the facts as I found them and to increase action against the Axis in every manner and degree possible. I hold no brief for either Chetnik or Partizan ideology. I am an American, believing in the principles of American democracy in America. Abroad, I can only hope, with others, that the will of the people may determine their life and government.-- Liberty or Death.

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While we saw and observed many Croats, Slovenians and Dalmatians both with Mihailevic and the Partizans, the living force and effect of this work is Serbia and the Serbians. It's purpose is to give you an understanding of these rugged, virile people and to plead for tolerance in the present agony of terror and bloodshed being visited upon them.

Further, I hope that the recorded personal contacts with the various leaders and troops of the Mihailevic forces will dispel from the mind of the reader any thought that these people were guilty of collaboration with the Germans or Bulgarian occupiers.

I hold no brief for either Chetnik or Partizan leaders or their ideologies. I am an American and I believe in the principles of American democracy -- in America. Abroad, I can only hope with others that the will of the people determines their life and government, not the chicanery of a few scheming rascals who crave power.

A.B.S.

Chapter 10

For four nights in a row we had said 'au revoir' to the people at Tekra, trundled to the RAF field to take off, bag and baggage, for the Free Mountains of Yugoslavia and the stronghold of Mihailovic. Two of these nights we waited sweating in the hot African night, only to turn back to our quarters when the motors refused to work. Two other nights we got aboard the Halifax; the Brigadier, his batman Green and I; zoomed across the Mediterranean into the chill autumn night, under a nearly indistinct moon, only to find, at the target, confused fires and an absence of signals. Sleeping part of the way in our woools and Sidcott's, looking like trussed-up fowls, sweating out over the target. Then - back to Tekra!

Tekra was a dump. A tent town in the desert just east of Benghazi, a temporary English dispatching place with vital responsibilities for the Greeks and Yugoslavs. The food, as was too often the case in the desert, was poor; supplies were exceedingly hard to come by and even the fruit squashes and beer at the bar imparted only a moderate sense of warm wetness. The bright lights were, one, a chap in the Irish Guards with a startling brush of blond mustache and the other a staff sergeant of the Regular Yugoslav Army. Each morning and afternoon we would pick our way down to the beach, avoiding sundry camels, goats and chickens on an intervening farm; strip to the nude and loll on the sand or fight through the surf to the comparative calm of the deep blue water beyond. At night, out of our shorts and into battle dress, both to conform to regulations and for warmth in the rapidly dropping temperature of the desert; we would eat our indifferent dinner and flock into the bar, where my friend the sergeant would hold forth on the art of drinking vodka and rakija, the plum brandy of the Yugoslavs, while we consumed our ration of whisky and beer. This till ten and then, to our tents, grab equipment, goodbyes around, and into the trucks and away to the flying field, for another try.

As we approached the general locality of the target the Brigadier decided to jump first with his batman. I would follow on the next circle. The signs on the ground were right, with fires burning whitely. Signals checked - this was it!

Our equipment was dumped through the hold into the blackness. With quick tense smiles the little Brigadier and his man bailed out and on the next wheel, I let go, perspiring freely, and was airborne.

Because of the mountains my takeoff was around 1400 feet. I felt the wind in my face and turned the huge bulk of my chute only to find wind in my face on turning. I

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was caught in a canyon current. Let me explain! Wind in the face means you are being carried backwards toward the earth. In landing, it is wise to face the direction you are going, legs fully extended, feet together, touch earth and collapse to right or left, from feet to calves to thighs to back and roll, then out of your chute; the automatic release having been attended to on the way down. If a landing is made backwards, your tail must immediately hit your heels preparatory to a roll on your back. No dodging can be indulged in and a crack on the head from a maliciously disposed rock or a recalcitrant tree trunk, might black you out for a considerable period.

I had barely finished turning when I landed, not gracefully, on my back. The shouting from a great crowd, blanked out partially by my concentration in attempting to hit the target, grew in volume. I moved experimentally, nothing seemed broken. A black-bearded giant reached me first, kissed me, shouting words of welcome. Then Lt. Col. Duane Hudson of the British Mission, affectionately known as Marke in nearly all of Yugoslavia, came up, followed by Colonel Bailey, who was being displaced by Brigadier Armstrong as Chief of Mission, and Lieut. Mansfield, the young Marine officer who had preceded me by about a month.

The bearded giant was very insistent on doctoring my nose, which was bleeding slightly, probably scratched by my equipment on the way down. The Brigadier had left for his quarters immediately upon landing and after some delay, due to waiting for the occupants of another plane, Colonel Beletic, Captain Toderovic and my staff sergeant, all of the Royal Yugoslav Army; we started on a half-hour hike for the bivouac, followed by oxen teams and narrow wheeled carts drawing the materiel and equipment dropped with us.

It appeared that the Minister, as General Drasa Mihailevic was always addressed, had awaited our coming for some time, but had been compelled to go back to his quarters, some half hour's journey beyond our own bivouac. I would see him the following day.

Mansfield was greatly pleased to see another American as was I. He had brought his horse for me to ride, but in the intense blackness, walking seemed better. He explained he had purchased two riding animals but the Col. Bailey had borrowed one and had been obliged to abandon it on a trip he had just made to compel certain Italian forces to surrender their arms or throw in with the Yugoslavs against the enemy. But more of this later.

Upon arrival at camp, I was greeted with my first Shumadiski Caj, a hot toddy made of rakija (plum brandy) and sugar. In the crisp cold of the mountain night it tasted delicious and upon turning in I slept like a top.

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The following morning I examined our camp with interest. Camouflaged rayon parachutes of the type used for critical packages, not bodies, were strung around center poles with a cotton chute underneath. The effect of a wall tent was achieved by using shorter poles with a lapped entrance on the sheltered side. Everywhere the use of parachutes was evident; pajamas, shirts, mattresses, etc. in the most brilliant hues. My own chute, of pure silk, was to be found nowhere and I afterwards learned it had been cut into small squares and dispatched all over the country for keepsakes.

Tents were scattered about under trees to eliminate spotting from the air. We soon learned to expect German reconnaissance planes and render ourselves inconspicuous.

After a breakfast of rakija and coffee we were informed the minister would welcome us at his headquarters that afternoon.

But first Mansfield suggested we go to the scene of my arrival. I borrowed a horse, an old black mountain pony whose ideal gait was a slow walk and we traveled some two kilometers west over a barren rocky trail coming at last to a beautiful upland pasture probably half a mile wide in length and breadth. At the western edge I looked down into the dizzying depths of one of the ruggedest, roughest and rockiest canyons I have ever seen. The bottom at least a thousand feet down, showed a wild raging creek, leaping and foaming through jagged rocks.

Mansfield pointed to a spot of smooth rounded rock not over ten feet from a very abrupt drop to the depths below and said laconically "Here's where you landed."

Further to the west, through a cleft in the next ridge a fair sized river was visible, running deeply and swiftly north - the Uvac, making appointment with the Lim at Rude.

It was a wild, desolate, mountainous ensemble; comparable to the wild grandeur of the Canadian Rockies viewed between Edmonton and Vancouver and mighty evergreens lent their levelly green everywhere in virginal profusion. Great pines, two and three feet through the butt and towering into the sky would make the soul of a timber cruiser rejoice.

Returning about noon we ate an indifferent meal, changed to American uniform (we ordinarily wore the more comfortable and utilitarian British battle dress) and set out for our appointment.

Chapter II.

On approaching the area I saw the headquarters guard drawn up in formation led by a huge officer who introduced himself as Captain Yanketich. The guard was clothed in a conglomerate manner with the gray of the Royal Yugoslav Army and captured Nedich uniforms black-dyed in peasant homes, predominating. Upon approaching a Yugoslav unit, the officer being accorded recognition shouts "Pomegi bog Unatsi" (God be with you, heroes). Immediately the ranks snap to life and shout "Bog ti pomego" (God be with you). It is a startling but arresting procedure and one which will never be forgotten.

Upon arrival at headquarters we were relieved of our animals and approached the Minister's party, drawn up in semi-military formation. Great, bearded, fine looking specimens for the most part with knives, guns and hand grenades draped on their persons. Many wore cross belts of machine gun ammunition and the shaggy fur cap of the old Chetnik with the skull and cross-bones and the motto "Sloboda ili smrt" (Liberty or death) thereunder.

The Minister is of medium height, fairly broad shouldered, rather spare, with a kindly, intelligent face, deep wide-set grayish eyes and a grizzled beard. His hands are strong and well shaped and he bears himself with simple dignity. His welcome, particularly to me, was patently sincere and cordial. His French is excellent but he speaks no English. However, conversation was in Serbo-Croatian with Colonel Bailey acting as interpreter.

I had questioned the Brigadier before leaving Tekra relative to any official communications he might be carrying to Mihailovic but had enjoyed no confidences from him. He was a rare type of Englishman who sneers at everything American and dislikes having Americans close to him. Thank God, this type of Englishman is as rare as their anti-British American prototype.

We were seated at a long, low table and coffee was brought to us; a coffee made of roasted barley, slightly bitter, but not unpalatable. Then to business.

The Brigadier produced letters from General Wilson, commander in chief of the Mediterranean Command, King Peter II and Colonel Putnik, head of the Yugoslav Mission at Cairo. I was never permitted to see or hear the contents of these letters by the Brigadier, although subsequently General Mihailovic read the British message to me. It was a blunt, forthright, almost arrogant letter demanding that Mihailovic intensify sabotage and guerilla activities immediately. However, no munitions or supplies were

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promised and no plan stipulated that could definitely be hooked in with Allied strategy. I learned, during the conference, that a pitifully small amount of arms, ammunition and clothing had been sent in; that much was defective or badly sized and that some rather large stores of plastic had been dropped in places utterly inaccessible to locations where it could be used. I learned however that Major Djuric, just north of Skoplja in the Vardar and Ibar Valleys and Major Kesserovic, in the Kopaonik, a region just west of the Ibar Valley, had been dropped some fifty or more plane loads of approximately two tons each over an eight month period and had remained more or less passive, due, the British thought, to Mihailovic's direct orders. I was curious as to Mihailovic's reaction. This man, who had headed the Ravna Gora Movement; a movement which was the first recognized resistance movement in Europe; a movement which stimulated the will to resist in other occupied countries; which had served to permit England to have some breathing space between her courageous, quixotic defeats in France, Greece and Crete, and later denied by sabotage and guerilla warfare the full use to Germany of the vital supply route from Central Europe to Africa through the port of Salonika, causing the defeat of Rommel. This man who had thrilled the minds of countless millions with the glamour and daring of his exploits; was he simply guerilla or the patriotic leader of an oppressed people?

I had come to Yugoslavia as an American who knew no European country or peoples, who spoke no language except run-of-mine English and questionable academic French. I had come in as an American in the British Mission, knowing this to be a British show, and knowing my country had no stake in this country except to help kill, pin down and paralyze the Germans. I would not be living there once the war was over, and any talk of post war politics before the Germans were driven out seemed sacrilegious.

The Minister stated his position, that the Ravna Gora movement was directed against the Germans and Bulgarians, but that the Partizans or Communists as he called them, were harassing his troops to the West, falling on their flanks when they, the Chetniks, were attacking the Germans, killing villagers who chose to remain aloof, and generally disrupting sustained action against the Germans. He further cited the BBC propaganda, which was giving credit for his exploits to the Partizans in a manner which ~~was~~ was engendering hatred for the British among the Serbs. He further decried sabotage which only temporarily embarrassed the enemy and drew terribly heavy reprisals on the innocent Serb villagers who were guilty only of furnishing food and

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supplies to his troops. He went on to tell of the terrific toll of Serbian life in Croatia exacted by the Ustashi under Ante Pavelich, estimated by the British as around 700,000 men, women and children; the terrific massacres at Belgrade and other towns by the Germans and the atrocities of the Bulgarians in the East.

He felt that he must, unless a strategic objective was indicated, refrain from operations which would call down too much Serbian blood in reprisal by the Germans, until he could more adequately arm his men and carry on sustained warfare, or declare a "Ustanak" or rising of all the people when and if the Allies started their invasion of the Balkans.

Now here was an impasse! It had appeared to me in Cairo that certain targets, the most important the Bers Mines just northeast of ~~Scopje~~ ^{Nish toward} on the Bulgarian border, plus the Treppa mines at Mitrovica should be tackled both by sabotage and from the air. The Ber Mines themselves produced 30% of Europe's copper and the Treppa mines were rich in antimony and lead. A knockout of plant in either place would hurt the Germans severely.

The first conference was a bickering match with the brigadier definitely out-classed.

After the conference, I got my orders! I was there simply to give an Allied illusion to the Yugoslavs. The Mission was British and the whole show would remain a British show. I would be permitted to see or talk to Mihailevic only at the discretion of the Brigadier. Mansfield would not be permitted near the headquarters. If and when I was accorded audience with the Minister I would be accompanied by Col. Bailey and the conversation would be in Serbo-Croatian. I was even forbidden to address Mihailevic directly in French. Further, any messages destined for my people in Cairo would be subject to the Brigadier's censorship.

Needless to say, I told the Brigadier I would report his instructions to Cairo, inasmuch as they violated my briefing on several specific points. Cairo, incidentally, backed him up on all points except my messages to them which the Brigadier was ordered to send through verbatim after reading them.

We, the Americans, were thus delegated to a supernumerary news gathering capacity and at that, sending in items gathered by the ~~Staff~~ ^{Staff} (headquarters) from various Korpus (corps) commanders by radio and courier. This intelligence could not be checked and, I felt certain, would have to be almost totally discounted.

I felt that the war had to be an Allied show and that America had a definite task to perform, even in the Balkans. It might be only supplies but supplies are the sinews of war.

Chapter III.

We were living a rather precarious nomadic existence. I purchased a three year old iron gray mare with considerable English blood in her and in addition to our riding animals we had tough little mountain pack ponies. The remuda was always near our bivouac and we were able to strike tents, load our pack animals and move out in a matter of minutes if attacked. The Germans struck at least weekly and Partizan groups felt free to fall on our flanks during these engagements. However, we were always on the alert and with two exceptions, had time to get loaded up and away before the main bodies of the enemy came within effective striking distance.

We moved through a wild, picturesque, mountainous country and our people knew this country as the palms of their hands. Our diet was whole roasted pig or mutton with potatoes and cornbread. The approach to butter was a fat called ^{KAJMAK} ~~Kimak~~ prepared from cream of varying sweetness thrown into a vessel and salted. That and a curdlike cheese called sir which brought up visions of the questionable cheeses of Africa, were eaten with the flat round leaves of corn or wheat bread. We, of course, had tea and I soon learned to look for coffee only from the Serbs: the British are as poor at making coffee as Americans are with tea. On pekrud or flight we were content with soup or a crust of bread, or, more often only delicious mountain spring water or rakija.

"POKRET"
"Pekrud" (translated insufficiently as movement), which came all too frequently, consisted of single file processions stretching out interminably over the trails; advance fighting parties forward, at the flank and at the rear. The body guard consisted of never more than 250 led by the huge 6 foot 6 black-bearded Yankotich, who, it was said, had been fighting with the Partizans in Bosnia until the followers of Tite began their ^{ACTIVITIES} ~~undermining efforts~~ against the ^{SERBS AS WELL AS AGAINST THE GERMA} ~~Yugoslavs~~.

Lack of knowledge of Serbo-Croatian was overcome partly by annexing Capt. Bora Todorevic of the Royal Yugoslav Army, an entendant. His efforts to teach me the language were not too successful, for the reason that his English was on a par with my French. However, we got along famously.

Bora is small, barely 125 pounds of wildcat. He graduated from the Military Academy at Belgrade in the 30s and was assigned to an ack-ack battery in Belgrade at the time of capitulation. He was taken to Germany as a prisoner of war along with several hundred thousand other Serbs.

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Eventually he was sent to Nuremberg and enroute escaped through a very small window from the box car in which he was riding. Then, across southern Germany, France, Spain to North Africa and up to England. The government in exile sent him to Cairo to make plans to join Mihailovic and he arrived in Cairo on the second of July. We had our first luncheon in Egypt together at the Yugoslavian Military Mission, where I was the guest of Colonel Radevich. Seated side by side we spoke a curious mixture of English and French.

We had come into Yugoslavia on the same night but by different planes and toasted safe arrival with a huge bowl of steaming Shumadiski caj together on landing. He was of the greatest possible assistance to me during the time I stayed with the Mihailovic forces.

Bera spoke to me of a batman or posilni as they are called. I wanted a smart lad who could double as a cypher clerk. I have only contempt for the officer who requires valeting and waiting on in the field and wanted a man merely to look after my horses and to pack and unpack when we abandoned or made camp.

After several trials I acquired Decimir, a Serb from ^{THE SANDJAK} Dalmatia, a ragged brown-faced, smiling lad of nineteen carrying as his worldly wealth a 48 bass harmonica (an accordion ^{BUTTONS INSTEAD OF} without keys). He spoke Italian well and could nearly always be found when unoccupied softly playing Serbian or gypsy songs or the rich melodies of Dalmatia.

He did quite well as a cypher clerk although he knew no English whatever, which suited my purpose, and he had the curious personal loyalty of the Serb, which was very comforting.

At night or when we rested on the road he would furnish the music for the Kela dancers. Generally two or three would start the odd, jig-like, shuffling dance with others one by one hooking arms and joining in until a great circle was formed around him, the music getting faster and faster until loss of breath called quits. For variety Decimir would dance, himself, playing the harmonica furiously, with a gyratory abandon that would bring down the house in a "two-a-day."

He wore one of the heavy homespun knicker suits affected so much by the Italians, bleusing pants reaching to the shoetops and an Eton like jacket that exposed his rear. I gave him a 38 caliber Smith and Wesson in an open holster to carry and his spirits soared to high heaven.

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Major Jack was given the task of instructing in demolitions and the first turnout was very large. Jack really knew his business and was a very careful and painstaking teacher and I felt I was having a very adequate refresher course; discussing time pencils, fuses and various types of explosives; how to figure quantities, prepare charges and do a competent job.

The second class met a week later for further instruction and we were aghast to see an entirely new crop of eager faces. Asking where the men were who had attended the previous week, an officer among them airily explained that they were now experts and would not need to attend further. They were an incredible lot of people.

A few days after our arrival Marke set out to blow a bridge near Mekra Gora, an operation which had been planned, by the Serbs for some time. The Brigadier insisted on going along, previously nearly setting Marke crazy with his questions. So much calculation and planning must be done at the moment of positive action in a country where one must fight his way to the point of action; that calmly setting down and attempting to explain minute details seems silly and the climax came when the Brigadier asked when the zero hour would be.

"My God", said Marke "How do I know. It depends on when we get there and whether we run into enemy patrols".

"Nonsense", said the Brigadier "This is a military operation and there will be a zero hour".

"All right" said Marke, steaming over "I will ask the Minister. It's his show. ~~Markt~~ You're going along to watch at his invitation and I have been asked to lay the charges."

They left and the trip was successful, a bridge being blown and two tunnels mined. I forgot to ask about the zero hour when they returned.

After the conquest of Yugoslavia in 1941 the country was nicely divided by the vultures. Italy was accorded the Dalmatian Coast and parts of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina roughly on a line Ljubljana- Karlovac-Banja Luka south to the coast just north of Dubrovnik. Germany annexed the major portion of Slovenia remaining and jointly occupied with the Croats the balance of Croatia, Slavonia and Bosnia. A strip like a chevron fifty miles in depth with one side the Banja Luka-Dubrovnik line and the other side extending to the border of Serbia composed the Free Croat State with Sarajevo the chief town.

In the jointly occupied German-Croat zone and the Free State the Ustashi terrorists of Ante Pavelic, trained for murder in Hungary with German and Italian money and already of proven value to the Axis in the assassination of Alexander in Marseilles, began their scourge of the Serbs. The rivers and valleys ran red with the blood of 700,000 men, women and children. Dr. Moljevic, a Serb from Banja Luka, saw with his own eyes from a hillside overlooking his home the Croatian murderers enter his home, drag forth his wife and two daughters aged eighteen and twenty and cut their throats. He fled to Mihailovic to implore him to protect if he could the innocent and helpless remaining.

Visegrad lies some forty five miles east of Sarajevo on the turbulent Drina River, forcing its way through narrow canyons to the north and its junction with the Sava.

Here the population had been a mixture of Musselman, Croat and Serb, peaceful and prosperous together until the legions of Ustashi carried their scourge of death to its homes and streets. A great lumber mill on the outskirts was requisitioned to turn out a greatly increased production for the Germans and an ammunition plant was set up in a textile factory across the river. Some Serb craftsmen and lumberworkers were spared to labor as slaves for the new lords and to the west and to the east on the railroad; ties, bridge timbers, planking and boards were dispatched for rebuilding the bridges and trackage destroyed by Chetnik sabotage.

On October 2nd. representatives of the mission, Brigadier Armstrong, Marko, Major Jack and I accompanied Lt. Col. Ostojich of Mihailovic's staff with a small cheta to join Chetnik forces in an attack on this town. We had two purposes, first, to liquidate the garrison of Germans and Ustashi and take their supplies and second, to destroy the great steel bridge six miles southwest of town which would close the

line between Sarajevo and Belgrade via Kraguevac.

The attack, coordinated and commanded by Colonel Ostojich gave me an excellent opportunity to observe the guerilla tactics of the Chetniks, as well as the training and combat ~~stamina~~ stamina of officers and men.

During the attack which began at 2 A.M. Marko and I ditched the official party and went down to try out my Carbine and his Biretta. The distance was rather great for accurate shooting and hunger finally got the best of us and we repaired to a plum orchard nearby, knowing we'd be sorry because they're rather laxative, but we were ravenous enough not to care.

As we approached a particularly luscious looking tree a machine gun started cutting branches just over our heads and Marko and I took turns trying to get the so-and-so of a Ustashi while the other picked baskets of plums.

It must be remembered that Chetnik weapons were rifles, light machine guns and hand grenades only and that sole means of control were by voice, courier and Very pistol. In that type of mountainous country, I timed one courier taking a half hour to go a thousand meters. However, except for the slowness of communication, the storming of the town was on the whole well carried out. The power house was put out of commission at first phase of attack.

I saw Chetniks, somewhat protected by the rifle fire of their comrades, rush the concrete bunkers of the enemy, pull the pins of their grenades, held them two seconds and heave them through the firing slits. It's no job for the faint-hearted and many were killed. Two soldiers with abdomen wounds came back for treatment. There was nothing we could do for them and I saw them later, dead on their bellies, where they had crept close to a strongly defended house, with a half grin on their faces, going out fighting.

The fact that many of the Ustashi had their families with them did not lessen the fury of the fight and in many cases women died with their men; and their children, caught in the murderous crossfires, lay mute and dead in wide eyed terror.

A battery of what appeared to be 105 mm guns emplaced on a hill across the river at the edge of a cornfield gave us hell until the Chetnik brigade on that side smoked them out, but in good order, getting rid of the breech blocks as they high-tailed to the mountains. The next day Major Jack destroyed this battery by placing one shell in the muzzle and one in the breech and setting them off. Junk!

we worked our way back after bit to our artillery, a single 46 mm mortar tick without sights. It was being fired by two ex-regulars who did a wonderful job in bringing fire to bear on the barracks and stores across the river.

We explored the town after a triumphal entry the next morning. The horses snorted over the still smoldering debris of houses and shops set afire during the fighting; dead Germans and Ustashi littered the streets with their steel helmets and black boots, most of them with festoons of potato masher grenades on their persons.

We had killed about 350 Germans and Ustashi and many civilians had been caught in the deadly fire. About 150 of the enemy had escaped to the high mountains, most of them to be tracked down and killed by the pursuing Chetniks, who, many with the vision of loved ones killed almost before their eyes by these same people had no mercy left.

Several of the Musselman mosques had been badly damaged which seemed a pity as they were quaint old structures but when I inspected a Serbian church, it's beautiful windows broken by vandals, woodwork hacked and carved with knives, with human excretion over the floor and altar space, I kept silent.

Across the deep swift flowing Drina the Turks had caused a bridge to be built in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, a massive beautiful structure. This we crossed to the other side where the German garrison had been quartered. Here were large stables filled with draft and riding animals, some sixty five still living in spite of the heavy fire. There was a fine hospital well equipped, shops and quartermaster stores. Before the Germans evacuated they set fire to the buildings but the hardy Serbs broke in and staggered out with heavy cases of ammunition and mortar shells.

Our loot consisted of two field pieces, a large amount of automatic weapons, 500 rifles, 2 trains, 2 automobiles, 4 motor boats, 3 rubber boats, 7 large and 12 small mortars, 1 radio station and a tremendous amount of ammunition. Most of the hospital equipment unluckily was destroyed by fire.

Archie Jack and I found two Nazi flags, huge banners with fields six by twenty feet. I slept for several nights using mine as a bed sheet in my sleeping bag with the swastika nicely centered under my rear. Desimir, my bat boy, finally persuaded me to remove the emblem and he traded the red cloth for kajmak and honey. That winter the swastika, folded, served to keep the snow out of my neck.

Later, we ate sumptuously at the main hotel. The Serbs were in an ex-

expansive mood and I congratulated them on a workmanlike job.

The next afternoon we left by trail for ^{THE} a bridge to the west towards Sarajevo. We passed the lumber factory and yards which had been fired during the attack the day before. It's charred, blackened, still burning lumber piles and buildings presaged an end to repairs of bridges and rights of way for some time to come. We carried 650 lbs. of plastic by pack animal train and were accompanied by two Yugoslav sapper officers who turned out to be former miners.

We rested at a little farming ~~zikk~~ settlement high up above the river gorge until midnight, moving out to be in position to attack at two in the morning. High above the bridge we waited on our bellies for the signal to rush the guarding bunkers on either side of the river. Nothing happened and Marko and I cursed at the damnable fog, abliterating everything but the dim lights on both ends of the bridge. It seemed like a heaven inspired camouflage to mask our close approach where grenades and automatic fire could shatter the night, the bunkers and the garrison. A ragged volley of rifles finally began the show and it was not until ten thirty that the living enemy retreated down the far side of the river, leaving our goal, the bridge.

It was a noble steel structure, 450 ft. long, suspended several hundred feet above the rampant leaping waters of the Lim. Major Jack rubbed his hands in gleeful anticipation.

Upon ~~after~~ measuring the bridge we decided 450 lbs. of plastic would do the job nicely, and ~~it~~ set up shop in one of the two tunnels on our side of the river, dragging dead Germans back out of our way.

After watching the sapper gang abusing good detonator-forming technique for a moment I pitched in and by the time Marko and Jack, who had an argument with the two sapper officers, and had to place the plastic themselves, had finished their job, I had the detonators ready. These we placed using prima cord, set the fuse for two minutes and walked carefully but fast; some to the tunnels and some to a gate house down the slope.

Things let go and a huge chunk of iron just missed a Chetnik at the mouth of the tunnel I was in. When we looked out the bridge was in two pieces on the bed of the river.

A week later we heard BBC announce that the partizans had blown this bridge.

CHAPTER V

We returned then to Vishegrad for the night (Saturday) where Marko and I slept in a private home overlooking the town bridge, a stone structure built by the Turks in the 14th century.

We were awakened Sunday morning by a death lament and looking out saw a woman being led across the bridge by Chetniks and immediately after heard a shot. We dressed and went down. A redoubt in the center of the bridge was literally covered with dried blood and women's shoes, even a crutch hinted at the slaughter of the Serbian villagers by the Ustashi and Germans during the attack, as well as some probable killing by the rage filled Serbs who had suffered the loss of yet more of their kinsfolk.

I was told the woman was the wife of one of the escaped Ustashi leaders, but that still did not excuse her murder.

I observed approximately fifty bodies, men, women and children, on the shore under the bridge and counted twenty two in the river. We passed to the other side and saw an old Musselman woman about seventy years of age, being led across the bridge by axak soldiers. We were horrified to see a soldier lead her to the redoubt, throw her off the bridge and fire two shots into her as she was swept helplessly down the swift stream. We hurried back to the headquarters, reported the killing and had the soldier committing the crime, shot outright. Immediately afterward another man was led up and executed for looting. Major Jack was unable to eat breakfast.

The attacks on Vishegrad indicated the following to me (1) the personal bravery and toughness of the Serb plus an absolute savagery in attack, (2) a deficiency in timing and preliminary planning which adequate communications would relieve (3) lack of coordination, (4) faulty and casual intelligence which meant a complete recalculation of measurement and explosive material after taking the bridge west of town. A quick job would have failed in accomplishment. (5) A further deficiency was in the handling of captured materiel, fully one third being either destroyed or ruined by careless handling and theft. This was particularly true of medical supplies.

Upon return to the Stab it became apparent, in our meetings with the Minister, which I was permitted to attend, that two great hates came before the hate for the Besche; first, hatred for the Communist as the Chetnik labels the partizan and

second, hatred for the Musselman (Serbs converted to Mohammedanism during Turkish occupation) and the ^{USTASHI} Croat. Both these hatreds have been accentuated by the German and Italian propaganda. The bloody trail of history, i.e. Turkish occupation, has also served its purpose.

After two weeks I became more and more convinced that some sort of physical barrier would have to be erected between the Chetniks and Partizans to get real action against the Bosche. However, the British insisted on establishing a boundary between the two forces which was not worth the paper it was written on. In fact, I contacted the Partizans on my trip out, within two days march from the Chetnik's headquarters, well east of the Lim River, which ~~is~~ was the boundary determined upon; and the Chetniks had maintained ^a preponderant following in Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro since early in 1941, when partizans were a scarce commodity in these regions.

Our job was relegated to intelligence reporting of data impossible to confirm and this did not appear to be the acme of American participation, if any. Accordingly, we began a report based on observations which I further implemented from a military standpoint. A request was made by radio to Cairo for permission to spot check the military strength, potentialities, and morale of the Chetnik forces and proceed immediately for Washington upon completion thereof to present our findings and recommendations for American participation, if any. On Nov. 6th, not having received an answer from Cairo and believing the trip essential from an information standpoint, we set out in company with Major Racic on an itinerary of five weeks, which would bring us up to deep winter in the Yugoslav mountains.

Our party consisted of myself, Lt. Col. Hudson who was sent to act as interpreter, Lt. Mansfield, Capt. Toderevic of the Royal Yugoslav Army, who was designated liason officer by the Minister, and four Yugoslav batmen. We used four riding and four pack animals, leaving the Mission around noon.

Early that morning I had taken Mansfield and Toderevic with me to see the Minister for the last time and over 'Sandjak coffee', (otherwise humorously known as Yugo-Brazil) the General told me of his admiration for Colonel Fertier, U.S. Military Attache at Belgrade at the time of the capitulation and also his high personal regard for General 'Wild Bill' Donovan, who had visited the Balkans just before the debacle.

The General reiterated his feeling regarding my trip into Serbia proper, that I should be free to go where I pleased, talk to whom I pleased and when I pleased, and gave Capt. Toderevic a letter with unlimited authority to gather what information

... - believed necessary, without hindrance or delay. All he asked was that I take back to America an unbiased account of what I found.

He said that while the Serbs were never quite sure what was in the mind of the British; they felt that for political reasons Churchill would not hesitate to throw the Balkans to the Communists if by doing so the British would be reasonably certain they could retain their hold on Greece and the eastern Mediterranean. With the Americans, the Serbs felt we had no purpose except to win the war by fighting the Axis; no political or territorial aspirations, and the Serbs felt we meant what we said without ulterior motive.

The General went on to say that Serbian sentiment was strongest towards France, who had come to her aid in World War I. A cultural bond had existed there for a long time. With Russia there had from time immemorial been an even closer bond of race, language, similarity, religion, everything but Communism which destroyed private ownership and made its followers slaves of the state. With Americans, they stood for freedom of thought, speech and enterprise, for themselves as well as others.

We exchanged pictures. On mine I wrote "A notre success" and on his appears "A mon très cher ami Colonel Seitz de l'armée Americaine dans les montagnes libres de Yugoslavie" - General Drag. Mihailovic. A final toast in rakija "To Freedom", a mutual embrace, and away, with a lump in my throat.

CHAPTER VI

The party passed successively through the areas commanded by Racic, Milavanovic, Ninkovic, Kalabic, Smiljanic, Vuckovic, and Cvetic. Until we reached Vuckovic we were passing through the very excellent farming section of Serbia, often very close to Germans or Bulgarians.

Our procedure was to meet the area commander as near the borders of his command as possible, having first sent couriers ahead with instructions as to the formulation and make up of strength tables. Upon meeting him we would insist on visiting his brigades, if possible, inspecting them in action. Our routine also called for stopping in as many villages as possible.

With Major Racic we made excellent time, traveling with four heavily armed bodyguards and sending our batmen and pack animals ahead by a different route so that we met only every two or three days. The friendliness of the natives was touchingly genuine, the Serb being naturally one of the most hospitable of humans and what consistently struck me was the utter devotion of these people for their peasant king and their peasant democracy they had fought through the ages to attain. Most evident also, throughout the territory we traversed, was the loyalty and respect in which Draza Mihailovic was held. They felt that through him the king would return. Little children, women, veterans of Salonika, old women, priests, the lame and the halt, all Chetniks, at times embarrassed us with their expressions towards the Americans who perhaps might be the means by which their freedom would be restored.

As an illustration, on the first day with Racic, riding along the country road we met an ~~old~~ old peasant trudging along. Racic with impish delight asked the old man where we were. Then said "Are you a Communist?"

"No" said the old peasant, "I am for the king".

"Well", said the Major, "We are Communists and will cut the throats of those who believe in the king."

"You will have to cut my throat, then" said the dauntless Serb "I am still for the king, God bless him."

We felt a curious kinship for these people; they are greatly like our own mountaineers; so alike in fact that I have remarked many times that change their clothes, have them keep silent and you would be unable to tell them apart. In place of our square dance they execute the Kolo, linking arms on either side and forming a long line which

sometimes snakes out to hundreds of people with a curiously shuffling step back and forth in perfect time, the long line moving slowly one way or another, depending on the leader who is generally a master of the dance. With increased tempo the dance goes on and on until the breath comes hard and the accordion player tires. It is a dance to keep feet and body warm on the trail, where the voices of the dancers softly or loudly keep time, dancing faster. AND FASTER.

Before I go further I want to dwell a little on the British Mission members. Unfortunately I was unable to understand or get along with the Brigadier. He was an admirable little man in many ways, rather slow thinking but it appeared impossible for him to try to understand Americans and American ways or Serbians and Serbian Ways.

With the others a very close bond was formed immediately, based on mutual trust and liking. Colonel Bailey, whom the Brigadier had displaced as Chief of Missions, was exceptionally intelligent, a master of the native language, and very objective in thought. His only fault was possibly lack of military service before the capitulation had taken him from the status of mining engineering in Serbia to an advisory capacity with resistance groups. He was most helpful.

Lt. Col. Hudson was a young, physically magnificent, mining engineer who had operated all over the world; the gold mining son of a gold mining father. He had lived in Serbia eight years before the capitulation. He had only stayed away four months after the Germans came, coming back for a pin point landing by submarine on the Dalmatian Coast with three Serbs. After the landing in the dark, with radio and baggage impedimenta, the dawn disclosed their location just thirty or forty feet below an Italian machine gun observation post. For three nights, they hid equipment to a safe place, needless to say quietly. Marko was in native dress and had no contacts. For two and a half years he stayed first with the Chetniks, then with the Partisans, sending out information as he could, finally organizing the first British Mission with Mihailovic. He had no creed but to fight Germans and the inaction which at times existed with both groups, Partisan and Chetniks, drove him well nigh crazy. On our trip into Serbia he was a tower of strength and guidance, intellectually honest, desperately disillusioned but carrying on like a good soldier.

Lt. Col. Bert Howard of South Africa was an engineer in civil life, had come through Abyssinia and Eritrea with a bang, had fought in North Africa and was a splendid executive. He had the very difficult role of peacemaker between all of us and the Brigadier.

Major Kenneth Greenlees was a Scot; tall, fair, able to outwalk a horse, very keen minded; relegated to housekeeping officer for the Mission.

Major Peter Solly Flood was a fighting Irishman, whom I had known at Kazr El Nil in Sairs. When he jumped on the target a perverse wind had carried him over into the next valley and all his equipment had been lost. He was an accomplished linguist, speaking French, German, Dutch and Italian. In Africa he had served as a combat Intelligence Officer and knew his job thoroughly.

Major Archie Jack was a Cornishman who had served in Northern India as a sapper. He was exceptionally likeable. After blowing up our bridge near Visegrad we had lagged behind the others on quitting the place. Hearing sobbing we investigated and found a little boy of four wandering on the river bank. He was desperately tired, thin and hungry. The skin on his bare feet was peeling from being wet for several days. High on the bank was a dead man, from appearance a Musselman. Jack took the poor little tyke before him on the saddle, covering him with his rain cape. We fished out a crust of corn bread and he ate ravenously. Gradually as his body warmth returned, he relaxed and slept with perfect trust. On return to Visegrad the Brigadier gave him over to the tavern keeper's wife. There are so many little homeless ones in that unhappy country. They have no politics, and yet they are the future of the land.

There was Captain Lefty, Signals Officer, a good natured harum-scarum living for today and hoping for trouble.

The other ranks were soldiers and marines, some of them escaped prisoners of war, the kind of chaps who would be a delight to any officer, happy to be lucky but able to work and kick liking a fight. Sergeant Tennison, chief signaller, would stick on the key hours at a clip for me. Oddly enough a year later we came back on one of the Queens together, he on his way to Australia and I, home.

Major Drageslav Racic was a big handsome black bearded, blue eyed Regular Artilleryman. He rode a lovely black gelding he had killed a Gestapo to get. That animal had the sweetest trot of any horse I have ever ridden.

Racic had a magnificent fighting record. He had graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Belgrade in 1929 and at the time of the German invasion he was in command of a gun battery at Ljubljana in Slovenia. On invasion he was sent north to the Italian border. Shortly he came back to destroy artillery abandoned by garrisons in Croatia when news of the German invasion was received.

From Croatia he proceeded into Bosnia, teaming up with a Major Tederovich, no kin to Captain Bora, my entendant. They together had a battalion of infantry and a battery of artillery. However, when news of the capitulation came they had their men take their weapons and go home, themselves going to Belgrade as civilians. There Racic heard of the Ravnagora movement of Colonel Mihailovic.

Mihailovic sent him back to Belgrade to gather recruits from soldiers who had reverted to civilian clothes and, for a cover; Racic opened the Cafe Chantant there, serving Germans and Serbs alike, and with his white chef's cap he must have been a honey. After a month, the Gestapo came. Racic escaped and upon reaching Mihailovic, was put in command of the territory west of Belgrade on either side of the Sava. He is a born leader, a fine executive and the peasants follow him blindly. He had much good equipment taken from the Germans and approximately 4000 armed trained men, mostly regular army or volunteers at Ravna Gora. Some 13,000 unarmed but trained men were scattered through his Korpus, praying for something besides a flail or knife to fight with when Ustanak was declared.

Our first night with Racic we came late to a beautiful little village high in the mountains. A great central plaza perhaps 300 feet wide ran down the center at one end of which was the hospital, at the other the church, and extremely beautiful old structure dating back hundreds of years. We supped late and slept at the house of the Pepe, a White Russian who had fled Russia when the Bolsheviks arose in 1917.

Next morning we attended church, for it was Racic's Slava. It was very impressive and my first introduction either to Slava or a Serbian Church ceremony.

In America we have birthdays but in Serbia when a child is born, he automatically becomes possessor of a day of considerable historical meaning, Slava. Its roots go back

to the period when his family accepted Christianity in the 11th or 12th century. At that time the family or tribe chose some Saint as a patron and on that Saint's Day gave thanks to God. Peasants today often beggar themselves to celebrate, and there is much feasting and dancing of the Kolo.

The Slava cake is prepared of whole wheat boiled with finely ground English walnuts and sugar. The Pope scores it north, south, east and west and everyone eats a small portion.

The feast was really one. Toasts in rakija were drunk. Then a chicken soup with rice was served. Then dzigerica which is the heart, liver, kidneys, sweetbreads of a beef, diced and fried with onion. Then the beef itself, roasted whole and served with potatoes and pickled peppers. Next pig also roasted whole. Wine was served, being renewed as your glass level reached halfway down. It took me a long time to realize this and for a while, in the wealthy part of Serbia, I had a continuous heartburn, both from overeating and from too much "vine".

For dessert a delicious pie was served and little cakes. Coffee, real coffee was served last, Turkish style. Then more rakija and the speeches.

From a child I had dreaded speeches. Being Irish I liked to talk but looking at rows of faces had always robbed me of words. However, in America, I had a message, perhaps merely words of encouragement to a long suffering courageous people, so similar to the Appalachian mountaineers of my own country. No one could understand my English until it was translated, so I was able to get up, toast Racic and then tell them why we were in the war; why it was necessary to kill Germans. I spoke of Patrick Henry, who in the Virginia House of Burgesses, during the Revolution, made his famous speech, forever the motto of freemen "Liberty or Death."

A Serbian banquet can be a very long drawn out affair, depending upon the rakija and wine available. Toasts and speeches generally continue until the host's house and the neighbors' houses are dry as a bone.

However, on this occasion we broke up at a decent hour as I had troops to inspect. The first lot numbered about 350 under arms, 900 without. They showed splendid discipline and questioning revealed many with professional experience. Rifles had in many instances remained buried for some time after the capitulation and I often wondered how many rounds they would stand. Oil was very scarce, also, and the lands or grooves of the rifles, in many instances resembled nothing as much as country lanes.

We next inspected the hospital. It was clean; clean and bare. The surgeon was an intelligent fellow who had taken his training in Vienna and Paris, but his sole equipment outside of cots and bandages, was zeal. He could cleanse wounds with rakija and beil bandages previously used, but of medical supplies there were none. Sixteen wounded soldiers and sick and injured civilians were being looked after. Being something of a fanatic on first aid, I had rather a large supply of quinine, parageric, aspirin, laxatives, soda, sulfa drugs, morphine syrettes and bandages. It was woefully inadequate for other than very temporary relief but the gratitude of the surgeon was beyond description. It certainly lightened my load and I would have felt like a dirty so and so, had I kept them.

Racic spoke only Serbian but was learning such choice English as "ekey deke" and related phrases in a scholarly manner. The second day we were like brothers and I gave him my watch when I left him. Only the month was important to know, anyway.

The old Pepe was quite a lad as were most of the Pepees I met. He was an ardent monarchist as were all the Serbs except a few followers of Tite. However, he said he wanted an end to the grafting and rottenness which had prevailed in Belgrade. This, and other remarks more or less confirmed ^{my} ~~his~~ beliefs that mountaineers were the same the world over. Keep them in their mountain village and they have the simple honesty the magnificence of nature breeds in the wilds. Take them to the flatlands and many succumb to the lure of easy money.

Speaking of Pepees and Serbs, the Serbs are not on the surface religiously inclined. They want to properly observe christening, olava, marriage and death but otherwise they are like most Americans, taking their religion very much for granted.

In the ancient days the Pepees were warriors as well as priests and to them goes much of the credit for the ingrained intestinal fertitude of the Serb. Your Serbian Pepee can preach or fight and has as a rule a wondrous capacity for liquor.

Hudson told of one occasion when he attended a christening. The babe was duly named and baptized and was put upstairs in his crib. A noble banquet was served with much wine and rakija. Finally in an excess of expansibility and brotherly love, the worthy Pepee pulled out his revolver and shot three times through the ceiling. Everyone applauded; but Marko observed the young mother finally gazing first with interest, then with growing alarm at the position of the holes in the ceiling. She jumped to her feet, screaming, and ran from the room.

followed by the frenzied husband and guests. One corner of the crib was pierced but the babe was sleeping peacefully, after the fashion of a good Serb.

The next day we had quite a long trip, trotting when the trail permitted. Eight hours of ~~this~~ this and when we had reached our village, high in the mountains, my mare was lame. Racic mounted me on his own animal, getting a spare for himself at the village.

Everywhere we inspected brigades, going down the lines, asking questions. Two brigades were sent north of the Sava where the Ustashi had terrorized several Serb villages and murdered the leading citizens. At night Mansfield and Hudson would question mayors, village officials and peasants while Bora and I would question the leaders of the Korpus on their knowledge of tactics and logistics.

Finally we came with Racic to the home of a high Serbian officer. The officer was not himself able to be with us, owing to his confining work in a German prisoner of war camp, but the wife, a very highly cultured lady, entertained us at lunch. Among the guests was a former professor of the University of Belgrade, which had been closed since the capitulation.

Dr. ---, the former professor, was a small silver-haired man of most excellent breeding and education. He had come from Belgrade but five days before. At lunch, which was a lovely thing in a really beautiful home we spoke in French. The worthy Doctor said he had been retired by the government but had with several others of the medical staff continued to give and grade examinations of those wishing to finish their work.

He felt that Nedic, the Serbian Quisling, had filled a certain necessary part of Serbian life, ~~even~~ as a collaborator, in that he had to a great extent, preserved law and order, and prevented the shambles of anarchy which might otherwise have existed. Further, he felt that Nedic was opposing Communism, although it was reported the Communists were beginning to organize around the outskirts of Belgrade, waiting the day the Germans left to seize the city in an attempt to take over the government.

He said the feeling for Mihailovic was high in Belgrade, that he was the symbol of freedom to the people. However he felt that Nedic and Mihailovic, both being so bitterly opposed to Communism might well combine forces against them. At this point Racic jumped up, eyes flashing, shouting that the Doctor was a dirty

collaborationist himself and should be shot. Much tact was necessary to cool him off.

We traveled on, eight heavily armed, magnificently mounted men, through villages turned out en masse to see the Americans. We would have to stop, drink their health, Mihailevic's health, the King's health and early return; suffer garlands of flowers to be draped around our own and our horses' necks, be photographed with the village officials, the veterans of Salenika, and the young ladies. Sometimes accordians would be produced and we would dance the Kolo in the village street.

In between we would inspect the brigades, occasionally branching off to observe one fighting the Communists, who for the most part appeared to be rather not too high class, maybe a couple of intelligentsia leading a group of stupid peasants, who were generally deserted by their leaders when attacked. I might say here that these were quite different from the fighting elements of Partizans in Montenegro.

Our last day with Racic we came at night to a wealthy farm. We slept excellently; and early the next morning reviewed two brigades, returning for a noon meal of truly great proportions.

It was a spot at the edge of the rolling foothills turning to the levelly Sava Valley grassland just a few miles to the north. Boys were leading some magnificent animals around with blankets and sireingles on their backs, looking for all the world, except for clothing, like a day in the paddocks back home. One bay mare was so magnificent she took your breath and I was tempted to buy her, until I thought of what I yet had to go through in the mountains, in my swing towards Montenegro.

It turned out that these animals belonged to German and Nedic officers who had brought them to the peasants for the winter. The peasants had an idea they might sell some of them and claim they were stolen. Knowing from reports that peasants caught with gold were being shot by the Germans, I was afraid to expose them to a danger so great and kept temptation out of their way by simply not letting our party look too long.

Next to the stables a Tzigany orchestra played the gypsy tunes of Hungary and the battle chants of the Serbs; two women singing quite beautifully some of the songs. Marko recognized many of them as having been highly paid entertainers in Belgrade. One gypsy rather embarrassed Marko by attempting to sell him his wife for five dollars American.

I left Racic with regret. In several brushes with the enemy he had been splendid and Mansfield's files were growing heavy with information.

We were turned over to Major Milavanevic at the borders of his command, saying ~~me~~ au revoir to Major Racic and the four men who had come with him. They were a picturesque, gallant, gay lot. Their startling similiarity to young Americans except for their peasant garb and mixtures of uniforms of the warring nations was incredible.

With Major Milevanovich, a stocky brown-bearded, dark-eyed chieftain in Serbian garb of dark green felt, we passed into the lush farming country just southwest of Belgrade.

The Major was a cavalryman of the old school and he rode one of the most beautiful Arab mares I have ever seen. It made the great grey gelding I rode look like a farm animal, which at times I suspected he was.

We were now in country easily accessible to troops. All through my Balkan journey I observed that Germans and Bulgarians alike preferred the towns and cities and stayed off the trails and away from the sparsely settled communities. Once out of their element, they became easy prey and knew it. They are something like their dog the Schnauzer, no nose for the weeds!

Every village through which we passed, we were greeted with open arms, great wreaths of flowers, wine and fruit. Sometimes the little children would get over-excited and handle apples like confetti.

At night after receptions, inspections, reviews and banquets, the Major and I would talk.

He had graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Belgrade in 1924 and the Field Officers Course in 1932 and served in the 3rd Cavalry Regiment of the King's Guard until just before the war when he had become Asst. Commandant of the 2nd Regiment at Belgrade. When the war broke out he was on the Roumanian border and met the German Tank Division coming in from that country. He withdrew across the Pancevo Bridge, blowing it behind him. Then came a time when he was hunted and he took to the hills, fighting when odds were not too great, until the armistice was declared.

When word of the Armistice reached him he was stunned and could not believe that his country was beaten. His senior officers told him the Germans only wished the Serbs to lay down their arms, but he could not believe this either. They would be taken prisoners and shot. He finally reached a decision; called his soldiers together and told them to proceed in ~~xxx~~ small groups of not over two or three to their villages, to bury their weapons and await a call to duty for the country. With his officers and a small group of soldiers who refused to leave him he went to the Sandjak, that area between the Lim and Drina Rivers, cutting off as with a knife Serbia and Montenegro. Here mountains pile on

mountains, rivalling for utter rugged grandeur any region in the world. It is a section of mountain herders of sheep, goats and cattle, and here and there a green flat plain along the tumbling, raging rivers racing to the seas where towns have existed from the dim past. In these plains, gardens are productive and the fine mellow Albanian tobacco can be grown.

The Turks, with their policy of ages "to divide and conquer" had set this land apart to separate the warlike Serbian tribes who could not be conquered; and placed therein Serbs who as an alternative to death, followed the religion of Mohammed and accepted with it lands, privileges and the cruel friendship of the Turks. Woe to the Serb who passed through this region. The torture of the Gestapo could not imitate the abominations and practices of the Turks and pseudo-Turks who had in their blood the valor of Kosovo⁵, tragically enough. In the wilder sections of the Sandjak bandits and outlaws lurked descending to kill Turks or the Quisling Serbs who had become known as Musselmen.

Into this region Milovanovic fled, remaining until he knew without a doubt that Serbia had fallen under the iron heel of the Bosche. His party separated and went to Belgrade in peasant clothing until rumors of Ravna Gora and the activities of Draza Mihailovic began to circulate. The Major sought Draza out in his mountain lair and joined the movement.

For a short time, he was commissioned by Mihailovic to join the Nedic staff in Belgrade to obtain information as to their intentions and movements, but after a particularly successful foray of the Chetniks for arms and ammunition he was discovered and fled to the Hemelja region to lead marauding bands. Finally he was given the area in which I found him.

Milovanovic was a superb horseman and had a presence with his men that made them idolize him. His horses were always in excellent shape which was unique in the Balkans where saddle galls are ordinarily just too bad for the animal and where they ride as viciously as did the Golden Horde of Gengis Khan.

I met and spoke to great numbers of peasants as well as troops and word suddenly filtered in that the Germans had finally decided to get rid of my party once and for all as we were inflaming the people in a manner that was resulting in sabotage and failure to meet food requisitions demanded by the Nedichevci for their overlords.

Milovanovic, as I have stated, had performed a magnificent job of keeping the peasants united. They gave freely of their food to his men, did a large part of his intelligence work and held Mihailovic almost as a god. Their regard for the young king was touching. Above all they desired freedom. Freedom to tend their flocks in the high mountains or in the villages. Freedom to send their children to school and sit in peace by their fires ^{AT} by night. Theirs is a peasant democracy. Karageorge, who established the present dynasty, was a swineherd and in the blood of Peter the Second runs the hot blood of the peasant, not the cold blood of ancient regimes. In the days of Peter the First, who might well be called a king without blemish, the freedom of the peasant and his right of free speech and action was jealously guarded.

Peter the First, grandson of Karageorge, had grown up in poverty in Switzerland. He knew the history of the cantons of Helvetia and had absorbed their great regard for peace. He saw in their mountains and people the ideal toward which his own people might well bend their efforts. And, when he was summoned to rule his people, he came reluctantly, but with unalterable desire to make his country a democracy like his beloved Switzerland. He held that ambition throughout his reign and if a soapbox orator wished to yell "Down with the King" in the park at Belgrade, he did so with Peter's full protection.

Peter's bed room in the Palace was of austere simplicity. His bed was the bed of a peasant with a palliase of straw.

When the first World War broke in fury after the assassination of the Grand Duke Francis Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary at Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia, and Serbia was drawn into the deadly vortex, Peter, born in 1846, had already passed on the kingdom to his second son Alexander ~~in 1914~~. When the overwhelming might of the Austro-Germans and Bulgarians finally defeated the Serbs in November 1915, Peter joined the army in its terrible retreat across Montenegro and Albania to Corfu as a common soldier. Then 69, he survived the ordeal in which over 100,000 perished from hardship and cold, and advanced with the Serbian and French forces in their epic drive from Salonika to Belgrade in six weeks. Then in the 10 days preceeding Nov. 11, 1918 the Serbs reconquered Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Peter, almost paralyzed from rheumatism contracted in his four winters of campaign, died in 1921, having seen the foundation of Yugoslavia

under the crown of his son, bought with the blood of 125,000 Serbs and Montenegrins.

He was a kindly, just, honest, upright man and king whose like had been seldom seen. When he was crowned king in 1903 he was regarded almost with loathing by the rulers of Europe because of his peasant blood and at his coronation, Great Britain was not even represented. At his death he was mourned by the world.

We were now deep in country garrisoned by the Germans. We managed to inspect troops generally twice a day, greet villagers, partake of bounteous repasts in selected homes and then push on two or three hours, traveling fast to pass the night. Towards the end of my time with Major Milovanovic, as we were making a mad dash one evening, firing commenced rather close. Scouts came back in about half an hour with the comforting information that a peasant, who had seen us that day, had imbibed rather too much rakija and was expressing his joy with firearms.

Chetniks sing on the march. It is their only indulgence. It is the soul of the Serb in a way. All the sadness of a thousand years of bondage, the din of battles, the death of heroes, the voice of freedom are in its scope. It is strong and lusty with the hot red blood of peasants, beaten, kicked, exploited by other nations, but free, unbowed, unconquerable. Mansfield, Marko and I sang them the Marine Hymn, Dixie, Anchors Aweigh, The Field Artillery Song, Army Blue, I've got Sixpence and many others but always they asked for the Star Spangled Banner. That was America to them.

We crossed the main road to Belgrade at a gallop, three at a time, avoiding almost the German patrols. The following night at Struganik where we were to pass over into a new Korpus and meet its commander we were informed he was fighting Germans; that a large body of the enemy had passed going north the previous day and that two bodies of several hundred each were approaching the town from east, west and south and were up the road only about three kilometers.

It looked like we might be in trouble. Evidently we were becoming a nuisance to the paperhanger.

We finally decided to go north a little ways and keep quiet for a day or so. It worked, and two days later we met our next man.

This chap had been severely wounded not long before and had been carried over the trails in a rude litter. His toughness saved him. We rested with him a day and late the next night came to the domain of Kalabio and the King's Guard.

Nikola Kalabich was one of the most interesting characters in all of Yugoslavia. He was handsome, black-bearded with a spirit and presence that sparkled with a zest for life. He had a quick intelligence and a sense of humor that had endeared him to his men and peasants alike.

With his sombre, black, well cut uniforms and immaculate linen he had the polish and poise of a gentleman and a soldier. His exploits were well nigh legendary. Because of his hold on the people and the helplessness of the Partizans either to infiltrate his organization or to gain converts he was their number one enemy according to General Dapcevic, the Partizan Commander whom I met later in Montenegro. The Partizans of course claimed he had cut the throats of many of their people, and knowing Kalabich, and his feeling that all must work together as a whole to destroy the hated Besche, I can imagine that Communists seeking to divert him from his goal and cause political dissention in his territory would receive short shift in a shallow grave. However, in the Partizan sections through which I passed, the social engineering of the Kommissars gave even the most lowly peasant the choice of death or conversion and any unhappy Chetnik or suspected Chetnik was immediately executed. This was a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

Kalabich was a splendid organizer and administrator. He had with him the remnant of the King's Guard, well trained seasoned veterans. Discipline had been maintained even in the forests. There were several squadrons of cavalry, whose mounts were kept in the villages by the peasants, ready for immediate use. He had, in addition, artillery, signalmen and engineers all highly trained while his infantry was exceptional

His arms were in excellent condition, due, I found, to a system of armories where proper maintenance could be followed. The percentage of German arms taken in raids was large.

Kalabich had graduated from the Reserve Officers School in 1932, was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant of Engineers and served until 1941 in the vicinity of Valjevo. His father, a field officer was Chief of the District.

When the news of the capitulation came in Kalabich was building a bridge over the Drina River near Leznica. He dismissed his company and with some of his men took to the forests as a Chetnik, gradually accumulating a force which he presented to Mihailovic at Ravna Gora in September 1941. He became commanding officer of the re-

formed King's Guard.

At the time the Germans attacked Ravna Gora in great force in December, he crossed Serbia to the Shumadia area southeast of Belgrade. When he passed through the District commanded by his father, who had chosen to remain on the job and fellow Nedic, Kalabich and his men were in pitiable condition; ammunition exhausted, half-starved, with only the will to survive and fight upholding them. The father saw that his son and his followers were refitted completely.

In December of 42, the Gestapo discovered that the old man had been secretly helping not only his son but others of the Mihailevic forces. He was arrested and condemned to death. Their method was a thing of horror. He was dragged over broken glass until he died; but no murmur came from his lips.

When I heard last summer over the Russian radio that Kalibich was collaborating with the Germans, I could only picture the broken bloody hulk of an old man, beloved by his son and wonder what manner of people could believe Americans could be so credulous.

Life in the Shumadia during the fall of 43 was not too hard. The wheat harvests had been tremendous and the great crop of plums, apples and pears had in some cases broken down the trees. Slivevitsa and ljuta, both varieties of rakija were in great store and wines both red and white had an exquisite bouquet.

Customs of the gazda or hest were becoming known to me. When I retired he accompanied me to my room to help me prepare for the night. He removed my shoes himself. For awhile I was embarrassed because it did not seem quite American, until I realized this was merely a custom. Sometimes other members of the family would come in with him, fixing my bed and tucking me in.

In the morning the gazda appeared when he heard me begin to move around, carrying a tray with a little loaf sugar and a glass of water. You dip the sugar in the water and put it in your mouth, swallowing the water. This is supposed to condition your mouth. Then comes rakija in small glasses and you drink one for the Father, one for the Son and one for the Holy Ghost. You can stop there because if you ever start on the Apostles you're licked for the day. After the rakija comes a demitasse of coffee, real or barley, as the case may be. This is your breakfast! Next meal - noon.

Meals with Kalabich were something to remember. We sat down with his

staff and bodyguard while another chap, an accordianist of talent, played and sang for all the world like a jongleur of old; watching his commander and following his moods.

The quartermaster was a great bodied, robust fellow with one of the best baritone voices my untutored ears have heard and towards the end of the meal he would sing the songs of the Chetniks, the ballads of the Tziganies and perhaps some of the haunting, lovely songs of Dalmatia. I made him promise to learn the score of ragliacci when I came again.

Buca as he was called, had a little plump wife who was a dentist and a good one, fixing Mansfield's and Marke's teeth which had become quite achy from lack of attention. Mansfield had mislaid his bridge and poor Marke had lived part of the two and a half years in Serbia almost like an animal, dodging Germans, Bulgarians, Ustashi, Lotichevci or what have you.

Madam Buca spoke excellent French and acted as interpreter for Buca who spoke only Serbian. I hope they both live through the terror.

Here, close to the King's estates, I drank wine from his cellars which the Germans had been unable to find. I intended bringing out several bottles for the King who had earlier tried so hard and unsuccessfully to return to his people. At twenty, the arguments of statesmen and the soft words of a beautiful princess are hard things to overcome when the other side of the picture is life of utter Spartan simplicity and life, too, of very uncertain duration. His people love him very deeply, however, because he is the grandson of old Peter the First.

I parted from Kalabich at Stragari. Stragari was a dead town, its burned and ruined buildings a testament to German hate, its ~~villagers~~ villagers, except for the few who managed to reach the sanctuary of the high mountains, slept in mass graves, their tortured bodies stilled in the peace of death.

Dogs still prowled the ruins and here and there some brave soul, undaunted by the dirge of death whispered by the trees and the blackened rafters, was laboriously removing the scars of hate and despotism.

As I approached the village I saw an arch of flowers with the red of courage predominating, and women and young girls came out with wreaths, so that we presently stood looking and feeling somewhat like plush horses, while the crowd cheered.

Long lines of troops, remnants of the once superbly comparisened Kraljeva Garda, now reduced to wearing the conglomerate rags of five armies, raised their shout of "Bog ti pomog" to high heaven at my greeting.

Kalabich spoke of the agony of Stragari and the will of the people to accept death in preference to bondage. He spoke of action against the Germans which had caused this reprisal; reprisal which the Germans intensified to fiendish proportions to curb the sabotage and guerrilla activities of the Yugoslavs. However, he laid emphasis on the fact that wherever the gain was sufficiently high, the people were willing and ready to accept the bloodbath to follow.

I was deeply touched. I had seen other burned and ruined villages; other places where burial was difficult because of the numbers and always the unquenchable desire for "freedom or death". It is the prime motive of the people, the oath of the Chetnik. Death is a thing that must come sometime; we are here today and gone tomorrow; but Liberty, that sacred privilege, must remain or nothing is of importance, even life.

I talked to the people. I had tried everywhere to do three things; stir up hatred against the Germans, attempt to lessen hatred against the Partizans by decrying the effects of civil war and to lessen the ill-feeling against the British caused by the biased announcements of the BBC. My first objective obtained some results and the Germans turned out several more battalions.

Knowing the deep devotion of the Serbs for the young King and having followed the pronouncements of Churchill and Eden as to his eventual restoration to the throne, I ended my speech with a wish for ~~his~~ his speedy return to them. I left Kalabich all I could leave of America, my Colt 45.

I left the King's Guard for Major Smiljanic's area with a bodyguard of three heavily armed men delegated by Kalabich to guard and keep me while I remained in the country. I was embarrassed because my carbine and my horse could have taken me where I wished to go. One chap spoke French which thus gave me another interpreter. He was a graduate of the University of Belgrade and did a great deal both for my comfort and for my knowledge of Serbian. I felt quite stinking when I later sent the three back to the headquarters of Mihailovic using letters as an excuse; because my plans for running the gauntlet of Germans and Bulgarians, who were definitely not friendly, and the Partizans who might not be friendly; in order to quit the country and report to my superiors, would not permit Chetniks to go along.

I met Smiljanic at Kamenica in the house of the Nedic Minister of Education. It had been uninhabited for some time. As my French speaking Guardsman said "Il a craint de nous".

We came through a driving rain which helped when we ran into a German patrol. We were gone before they knew what was up. I believe they thought some of them had been struck by lightning.

We supped very late and the following day received Smiljanic's staff company, hard bitten regulars, at a large village; more flowers, where from I ~~did~~ do not know because November was nearly gone. In the streets after the review we danced the King's Kolo, a stately dance which did not quicken in time as do the other Kolos. The Court's wind was probably not too lasting. The effect was beautiful however and does not call for sorry humor.

Some days before I had sent a courier on to Lt. George Muselin, who had been dropped into the territory of Markovic, far from the Stab of Mihailovic, requesting him to meet our party at Konjusa on the 25th, so that the three Americans in that country could properly celebrate Thanksgiving Day. I had seen many turkeys both bronze and white, and knew that, previous to the war Serbia had shipped a great number of the noble birds to England for the Christmas season.

I had sent a very trustworthy man as courier and hoped against hope he had been able to get through. The commanding officer of the brigade we were to review at Ljuljaci on the morrow reported being ambushed by Letichevci two days before, losing three men and one officer but killing seven of the enemy who had to flee.

We pushed on Wednesday night to Konjusa which was a very lovely village

surrounded on all sides by mountains. Snow fell and the moon shone with dazzling brilliance. The village received us as brothers and promised us a Thanksgiving we would never forget.

The morning was grey but holiday was in the air; pigs, sheep, chickens, and bees being slaughtered in the compound back of the house. Bora reported the acquisition of two beautiful turkeys and said the Slava which we were going to have beggared description.

Our review was attended by all the surrounding villages, a truly great throng and the midst Colonel Simic, Inspector General of the Army dashed up in a barouche attended by fifty cavalymen. They had come 74 kilometers without rest for this meeting, through mud and snow.

At Konjusa I found the two turkeys, nice birds, weighing about 12 lbs. each ready to be barbecued. I was aghast at the sacrilege and got Colonel Simic's Assistant, who spoke good English to volunteer to see that the birds were properly stuffed and roasted slowly with plenty of basting. I learned that evening he had put each bird in custody of one woman and basting had taken place every five or ten minutes. The birds were perfect.

At six o'clock Muselin arrived with Captain Vuckovic. The Lieutenant is an enormous fellow, not tall but weighing 250 pounds and all muscle. He had grown a beard which made him appear more like a native than the Muselin who was a tower of strength at the University of Pittsburgh several years before.

I had come across him in Cairo, eating his heart out for a chance to get into Serbia. His parents had come from there and he spoke the language perfectly. He was that rare type of first generation American, whose parents, conscious of the contrast between the old world they had known and this great, raw, vital new land of opportunity had labored mightily to make a man and had succeeded.

I had had to sell both our people and the British that here was no proverb but a simon-pure American, who with his language ability, could reach our people with an ease which the average American could never hope to attain.

There was some question of a twenty eight foot chute holding him without splitting panels on opening, but outside of a mild seismographic disturbance when he landed, the trip down was a perfect success.

As twilight was succeeded by darkness, fires began to appear on the

mountains around us. I counted eleven huge fiery As blazing fiercely. I remembered Mihailovic telling me the Serbian people were to honor America on that day and for my money it was a perfect tribute. It showed the high esteem in which we were held because such fires were only lit for the King or for outstanding events. It also indicated the morale of a people who risked being killed if found near the fires. As it was the Germans had a very uneasy night thinking probably a general rising was planned.

Our Slava was a great success. I received the honors from the Pope as the senior American officer. It was a feast of feasts but I'll confess that to the Americans the two turkeys represented something we couldn't put into words.

The Serbs were amused at birds being cooked as they were, so the Moose and I took one bird and Mansfield and Marko the other and really went to town, neglecting to a great extent the rest of the sumptuous repast.

Never were there such speeches as afterward; the wine and rakija of course playing no part in the affair.

I left early with Colonel Simic that night and learned the next morning that even the great bunches of grapes hung in the banquet room to dry had been consumed by the hungry guests.

We said farewell to Smiljanić and pushed on. Winter was nearly on us and in five days we had almost 150 kilometers to traverse to Cvetic's area.

Capt. Vucković was a very likeable chap and so like an American in character and mannerisms that I found myself time and again breaking into English with him. He had a vivid sense of humor and an easy courtesy which with a high intelligence, seemed to destine him to greater stature in the future. He was an Army brat, his father having been a General in the Yugoslav Army.

When the Yugoslav Government signed the German pact in March of 41 Vucković left the country and went into the Greek Army as a volunteer. After the coup by which Prince Paul was ousted and Peter took the throne the Simović government reinstated him and he saw action against the Bosche in the Banat as a battery commander. He retreated into Serbia, saw action at Begevac then took to the woods; being one of the very first to join Mihailović as had Smiljanić. With a cheta of a hundred, Vucković in September captured the towns of Milanevac, Cacak, Stragari and Kragujevac in rapid succession together with many German prisoners. Serbia was afire with the spirit of Ravna Gora.

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Then the Germans came in force and at Kragujevac alone 9,000 men, women and children were killed in reprisal.

For this action Vucković received the Order of Karageorge Star but, as he said, the lives of the innocent people butchered by the filthy Bosche would haunt him forever and he felt he must always balance the results of future action against the lives that would be taken in reprisal.

Practically all of Vucković's officers were young regular army men who had joined the movement at Ravna Gora. Their morale remained high and fighting continued without a let up. They lost severely in many cases but the Germans had finally decided that to attempt to hold any but large strategic towns in his area was an open invitation to a garrison being wiped out and as a result the Captain possessed telephone lines over the entire area which enabled him to outguess the Germans on most occasions.

A young brigade commander, Captain Djeric had with him his wife, born Ruth Kalabic in New York, the daughter of Americans. She had been taken back to Serbia when she was three where her parents had died and she had remained. She had

no English left but we were very proud of her. She was deadly with her Beretta machine gun on the trail or in battle, rode like a cowboy, tended the wounded and in a home conducted herself with the easy elegance and courtesy of a cultured American woman.

Young D.r. Carioevic who tended the sick and wounded in the entire area had been educated in France and England and spoke English almost without accent. The medical situation itself was terrible. However, for the Black Market in Belgrade, German crooks were stealing and selling anything they could lay their hands on for profit. We were able to get quite a sizable lot of medical supplies, shoes for bare-foot soldiers and even Lugers and machine guns without too much delay from that source. We also persuaded Mrs. Djeric to organize the women into a sort of Red Cross activity pending the problematical help in the way of medical supplies from the Allies; and lint was sterilized and bandages rolled from old soft linen which was turned in to a surprising amount.

Marke, Bera, Mansfield and I held a council of war. Winter was upon us; my driving ambition was now to leave the country and endeavor to bring aid to these people who had fought when only England besides was fighting the Germans; when Russia had signed the Russo-German pact to avoid war, when France, Belgium, Holland, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Denmark, Norway and the little Baltic States had given up the struggle. These Serbs had lost one out of every eight lives in the struggle for freedom and we felt now that Mihailevic was a great patriot with a single purpose, to deliver back to the King, this country of mountains and rivers of which he had been designated Minister of War. If both partizans and Serbs were armed they would have mutual respect for each other and if the hated Ustashi element were purged from the ranks of rite, some sort of peace could probably be made. If not, Tite was in the West and Mihailevic in the East; the Sandzak was between, a sort of no-mans-land. Hate would die in its barren regions.

At a little village which shall remain nameless we buried all but our bare necessities preparatory to leaving the country and I sent word to ~~the~~ the Minister to arrange a canal through to the coast as I would be ready to make my way out the 5th of December.

The country was becoming more mountainous and we floundered to our waists in the snow. At a little place called Jelende, on a main railroad we had to capture the Nedic gendarmes who knew of our presence and take over the railroad station as

two troop trains, one filled with Bulgarians going north, one filled with Germans going south passed through. The trains stopped for fuel and for fifteen or twenty minutes we sweated it out back of the station while our men, in Nedic uniforms that did not fit too badly, talked with the slovenly troops.

We stopped that night with a peasant who was a great man in the village. The villagers tell the story of a Nedic Major of gendarmes, a former resident, who was stationed in Belgrade. A young girl from their village who had spurned his advances when he became a collaborator found it necessary one day to go to Belgrade. When he accosted her on the street and she repulsed him he turned her over ~~to~~ to the Besche as a spy and had her executed.

Our gazda, not large, not powerful, except with horror and loathing of the Major, went into Belgrade in the day time; brought the Major out with his pistol held in his coatpocket, in the best American gangster style, saw that he had a fair trial, made him dig his own grave, personally shot him and tumbled him in. At any time in Belgrade an outcry from the Major would have brought our gazda's death.

At the little nameless town I met a fine old peasant, a veteran of Salenika. All of his many children, except the two youngest had graduated from universities and made names for themselves. The youngest boy had several years of art before hell broke loose in the Balkans and one morning insisted on making a charcoal sketch of me. It only took a little over half an hour so the time wasn't wasted as I was able to interrogate the other peasants crowded into the room.

We had word that Bora's wife was on her way and took time out to permit her to catch up with us but the very loyalty of the peasants prevented her finding us. It had been over two years since Bora had been taken prisoner and his little daughter had then been very small.

It seemed hopeless finally and we started on the last lap in Vuckovic's area winding up at the pleasant village of Luke where we had our horses reshod preparatory to going into the high mountains. Here Bora had his Slava and had the misfortune to lose his binoculars, a very important item of equipment.

The generous Vuckovic insisted that Bora take his high powered artillery glasses and in desperation I presented mine to Vuckovic as a gift.

After taking leave of this chap who in my opinion has the greatest

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potentiality of any Yugoslav I met in spite of his youth, and leaving the Meese, we went on with guides to the borders of Cvetic's area, sending Vuckovic's glasses back to him. He probably was exasperated but needed them worse than we did and I thought the Meese could use the other pair.

CHAPTER XII

Radomir Cvetic was not old, 37, a regular Engineer, graduated in 1927. When the war began he was stationed at Nish and was sent to destroy the railway bridge at Kachanik Gorge. The bridge was prepared but German tanks rolled up too quickly and many of his men were killed and the balance were compelled to flee. He succeeded in blowing two bridges near Prishtina and prepared for demolitions in and around Mitrovitsa. However, he was captured at Mitrovitsa but managed to escape. Twice thereafter the Germans took him prisoner but he was x very slippery and got away.

Cvetic impressed me as an extremely able officer and was surprisingly up to date on combat engineering procedures. His officers were all regular army and his whole area functioned perfectly for guerilla activities. Both his Javor and Drinska Corps had accomplished a terrific lot against the Germans, the latter taking part in the attack on Visegrad, and implemented the attack after which we blew the bridge on the Lim River. From the first of June until the 21st of October this corps alone had fought 18 major engagements killing over 1300 Germans and Ustashi with a loss to themselves of 75 dead and 155 wounded. They had taken a great amount of weapons, ammunition and other material and had succeeded in destroying all communications in the regions of Foca, Cajnica and Visegrad Srez (counties) cutting off rail traffic between Serbia, Bosnia and the Sandzak for at least six months. This during the period that Allied operations in Italy were most critical.

It was now the 5th of December. Winter had set in in earnest and there was five feet of snow in the high mountains. The mountain paths were packed like ice from the feet of the peasants. I waited eagerly for word from the Minister that a canal was ready to the coast. Finally word came that the Partizans were being driven out of eastern Bosnia into the Sandzak into our path and it would probably be three weeks before we could begin our trek.

We settled down to enjoyment of life. Remaining tense and expectant does things to men dodging the enemy and when relaxation can be indulged in morale improves.

The 7th of December I recalled two years before passing through Louisville, Ky. with my wife, on orders to the 5th Service Command from my old Division alerted for overseas, and how badly I felt that I might have to fight the war from a desk because I was overage as a Captain. Destiny performs in strange ways and here I was with my

finger on its pulse.

We were settled in a charming little village on a high plateau. We had another horse swapping deal, this time with money to boot as my animal had gone snow blind. The new animal was a big tough mountain pony, very strong but exceedingly lazy.

One hundred young Chetniks were sworn in by the Pope of a nearby monastery and I felt a thrill in watching this ancient ceremony of patriots. Sworn never to end the fight until death unless freedom is achieved.

The pope was an intriguing individual. Tall, 6 ft. 5 in., handsome black-bearded and a bachelor, he looks ten years younger than his fifty odd. He had taken part in the trek to Corfu during World War I and laughingly told of the four great bullocks that had drawn old Peter the First's carriage through the mountain passes. He was the head of the beautiful ancient monastery at Studenica and we were urged to honor him with our presence.

It was nice for once to go on a sight seeing trip, escorted by a cheta, of course. It was a long ride over a beautiful, wooded mountainous section to the estates of the monastery. The brothers worked with the peasants in the field and vineyards and signs of good management were everywhere apparent.

The Popes of Serbia had kept alive in Serbian breasts the fierce desire to be free and in the early days were the warriors and leaders as well as the spiritual advisers of these fierce mountaineers. Monasteries were fortresses and places of refuge and Studenica is one of the most historical of all.

A hostel stood at some little distance from the monastery where pilgrims and wayfarers in the old days might obtain food and lodging.

The outer walls of the Monastery were tremendous with the old sally-ports and places of defense still visible. Springs within had made the place well-nigh impregnable in the old days. Steven Dusan the brother of St. Sava had built the oldest chapel during his rule between 1331 and 1355. It was also his burial place.

We were greeted on entering the grounds by several hundred children, orphans of the Serbian victims of Ustashi, Musselman and German hate. They were quite cheerful and happy, poor youngsters: schooling was being carried on and they were warmly dressed.

We were taken to the second floor of a huge lodging of stone where a great stove warmed the air. A very excellent meal was served and the Pope brought out the choice red and white vintages which had been successfully hidden from the Germans.

I learned that his adopted son was then in Chicago at the Serbian Orthodox Mission there and that the old boy's ambition was to one day see America with his own eyes, come liberty from the Bosche.

The matter of beards among the Chetniks was finally explained to me. It is a sign of mourning; mourning for loss of freedom.

Our expectation was to retire to a small farmhold some three kilometers away for the night as there was a German garrison of some strength in a village just 5 kilometers from the monastery; but with dinner, speeches and freely flowing wine we decided to put out a series of guards and sleep at Studenica.

The Pope finally conducted me to a room reserved for the Patriarch, a very large beautifully furnished place and helped me get ready for the night. When he saw my Colt 45 he fondled it and finally said it would probably make a beautiful noise. I told him to go ahead and shoot but to aim at the mountain. He strode to the window, raised it and with a beatific smile let all eight shells thunder into the night.

The next morning we looked the place over. A great, high watch tower used in earlier times stood sentinel over the whole place but time had rendered it unsafe aloft. The great alarm bell, used to call in the peasants when the Turks approached, was still there.

The old chapel of St. Stephen was a beautiful stone building with inside some truly beautiful mosaics, now being restored. At various times when the Turks came and again in World War I when the Bulgarians had robbed and defiled the place, these works of ancient art had been hidden with plaster. Now a Brother with painstaking care, was cautiously removing the coating. They are supposed to be one of the finest expositions of the Renaissance and one of the earliest examples of three dimensional technique.

The Chapel of St. Sava is a magnificent building of Italian marble with a truly beautiful leaded glass window back of the altar.

Inside to the right of the nave is the skeleton of St. Stephen enshrined in a beautiful casket of silver lined with red velvet which has retained its color through the years. The robe, also of red velvet, covering the skeleton is exquisite and an opening at the head reveals the forehead of the skull. A pleasant spicy odor prevails when the casket is opened.

The pillars at the entrance door are on the one side pure Serbian, on the other Byzantine with unfinished details because "only God can make a perfect thing". I had a feeling that here was the dividing line drawn so long ago when the eastern and western spheres of the Holy Roman Empire were founded. Here was true art, a curious mixture of the East and the West, dedicated to freedom and self expression.

On our return to Rudno the village was conspicuously quiet and we soon found the reason. The Germans had come in force almost immediately after our departure for the purpose of requisitioning food. Their procedure was simply to take eight or ten of the prominent citizens, one of them our gazda; seize the desired amount of wheat, corn, rakija, sheep and cattle and use the hostages as shields against any retaliatory action by the Chetniks on the way back to Rashka whence they had come. No one had been killed but the villagers were very nervous and we decided to go on to a secure farmhouse some six hours away and remain until the Minister felt we had a chance to make a dash for the Coast. I had heard besides that one village we had visited ~~near~~ near Belgrade had been largely burned and many villagers killed by the Germans simply because they had made us welcome.

Our new abode was in an extremely wild wooded mountainous section where from a lookout atop the mountain we could see for thirty or forty miles.

The farmstead consisted of a main house where the family lived. A huge room twenty by thirty feet with a long table and benches served for dining room and place of entertainment, while the other part was the family's sleeping quarters.

A guest house of two rooms and a store room provided quarters for our party. A cookhouse, windowless and with a great hearthstone for bread baking completed the menage. Numerous barns for cattle and other farm buildings stood some distance away, including a good old Kentucky style mountain still.

During the day we played cards, read the Belgrade paper *Novo Vreme*, took long walks with parachute calisthenics and talked with the Serbs.

Chapter XIII I wanted to know more about Mihailevic and many of these young officers had served under him or had attended the academy when he was an instructor.

I learned he was born in Ivanjica, near Uzhice in Serbia in 1893. His parents died when he was very young and he was raised by an uncle, Chika Vlakje, a colonel in the Veterinary section of the Medical Corps. The old colonel had a flashing sense of humor which he passed on to Draza.

In 1910 the young Mihailevic entered the Royal Military Academy. Then came 1912 and the Balkan War. He entered the famous Shumadia Division as a corporal and served with distinction, revealing for the record great personal valor and coolness in combat. He was wounded and decorated with the Obilich Gold Medal for personal bravery.

At the end of the war in 1913 he reentered the Military Academy ~~xx~~ with the other members of his class, being promoted to 2nd Lieutenant. Then came 1914 and he must take up the sword again, commanding a machine gun company. Twice wounded he was decorated with the Medal of the White Eagle with swords for his bravery. Then came 1916 when as a full Lieutenant he was placed in the Yugoslav Division, containing mostly Yugoslavs from The United States, Canada and South America. He was wounded again in action against the Bulgarians and left the hospital without authority to take command of his company in the famous drive on Belgrade in 1918 from Salenika. His conduct won for him the Karageorge Star with Swords, the highest Serbian decoration. Now came peace. He entered the War College a Captain in 1919 and three years later became a member of the General Staff, as a Major.

In 1934 he became Military Attache to Bulgaria going on to Prague in 1936.

In 1937 he returned to serve as Chief of Staff of the Slovenian Drava Division and in the beginning of 1938 took command of the 39th Infantry Regiment in Celje. He distinguished himself in training and leadership.

In 1939 he became Chief of Staff in command of Fortifications but fell counter to General Nedic believing it is not a good policy to build up tremendously expensive fortifications which the very topography of the land doomed. The weakness of the Maginet line was already at hand for an object lesson. Draza held out ~~af~~ for high modernization of arms and great mobility. Now a Colonel, he was transferred to the newly created Supreme Military Inspection department as Chief of Staff.

In his zeal to keep Yugoslavia strong, Draza began to introduce new conceptions of defense and offense including reports on the intraracial intranational propaganda being so viciously stirred up by Italy and Germany through their paid Croat tool Dr. Ante Pavelich. He brought out the trickery of politicians who were filling their pockets with money intended for roads, education and defense.

Nedic was horrified and Mihailevic was courtmartialed and sentenced to ten days imprisonment for refusing to withdraw some particularly damning but true remarks.

Draza's reply is worthy of study. "Mr. Minister (General Nedic) things which I brought out in my report exist, in my opinion, and are absolutely true. They are important for the welfare of the Army and the whole country and we cannot pass over them silently and blindly. God grant that I am mistaken, but if you are mistaken, then woe to our country - there is no help."

The transfer of the Colonel to Mostar was effected as assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Army Coast Guard Territory.

Here the German invasion caught him, having failed to put over to the brass hats of his country a type of defense which would have proven very costly to the enemy.

The horror of capitulation engulfed him and the terrors being perpetrated on his people by the Ustashi steeled him to continue the fight.

Ravna Gora was the answer; and for awhile in 1941 Serbia was aflame with the spirit of the Crusades. It was a holy war against tyranny.

No matter what fantastic tales may be told and believed by an apathetic world, this Colonel of Infantry began the spirit of resistance against the Bosche and held on even when aid from the Allies was never brought to him.

And his family; four children, now grown and his wife? Where are they?

IT IS REPORTED

A Mrs. Mihailovic sleeps in peace after being executed by the Germans at Dachau in 1943.

The Bosche put a price on his head of 10,000,000 dinars and then took his family as hostages. He was given a few hours to decide to stop his depredations or lose his family.

His calm, scholar's voice, firm on the radio transmitter maintained in the inaccessible fastnesses of the high mountains, addressed his wife telling her not to fear, that he would fight on until freedom would once again come to these mountains they loved.

Major Cvetic asked our party to attend the induction of young Chetniks taking place on Golija Mountain on the 19th. Twelve hundred young men were to take the oath of freedom.

We left early and for nearly five hours trotted our animals to Golija. Its top was a great table with a vast cleared spot probably half a mile square.

Four hundred members of the Dezevska Brigade were drawn up carrying the battle flags of World War I. They were in the conglomerate uniform of five armies but presented an imposing appearance. The young recruits, twelve hundred strong, in peasant costume, each with a torbica to carry his food and necessities were drawn up in battalions. Three priests chanted the invocation and it was a very solemn and impressive occasion. Afterwards a hot lunch was served in the snow.

I'd like to make a few remarks on peasant clothing here as they were all so strange and interesting. The men in Serbia wore a heavy homespun, generally in pastel shades of grays and browns with a sport type well-cut single breasted jacket and trousers somewhat like riding breeches, very full-cut at the knee and unfastened at the bottom. Heavy knit socks with brilliant patterned tops came up over the trouser bottom and heavy square toed, hobbed shoes or "opanci" were worn on the feet.

The opanka of the Yugoslav is an extremely interesting piece of footwear, to an American particularly, since it is so similar to our Indian moccasins. It is made ordinarily of bull or cowhide, wetted and shaped on moulds to almost the identical pattern of a moccasin except that the toe is shaped upward like a curving horn, sometimes three inches long. There is no beadwork but some coloration and much fancy stitching. Worn over heavy wool socks it makes a person wonderfully light and sure footed. The horn, by the way, was inaugurated by the Turks and was a symbol to the Slavs of bondage. Until the Turks were finally driven out of the country, it was an offense to wear another type toe and the punishment was several years imprisonment. Today it is still made by many peasant shoemakers although villagers and townspeople now wear a more moccasin type shoe. For the mountains it is ideal footgear but in winter only the wearing of several pairs of socks will keep the feet warm and dry.

Because of the wearing of the opancies, Yugoslav feet are rather large and the small sized military boots sent in by the British had to be utilized by a

boys and women.

The traditional Serbian costume is of heavy felt in black, brown or green beautifully cut. Trousers are similar to those described above and two close-fitting double breasted jackets, one sleeveless as a vest, the other with sleeves all beautifully bound with broad silken braid.

Caps are generally of felt, something like an overseas cap, or the old Chetnik type shubara of black astrakan, white or brown fur with the death's head on the front.

In Montenegro jackets were mostly white or natural color and trousers sky blue felt with an extra foot of material between the legs so that the crotch hangs out in a most peculiar way. White gaiters of felt complete the gap between opanci and trousers.

Bora started back to the farm early and the rest of us went a round about way down the mountain and stopped for the night with a Salonica veteran. When we arrived home the next morning we found that a courier had come from Kalabic with Shumadia costumes, beautiful heirlooms which he must have combed the countryside to obtain. Ladies wear is fascinating to both man and woman, whether in Paris or the fields of Iowa, but in Yugoslavia, as in all the mountainous regions of Southern Europe, the age old costumes both of the men and women appeal particularly. We Americans like costume plays and this whole section reeks of "Graustark and "The Prisoner of Zenda."

I have just described in an amateurish way the gear of the men. The costumes of the women, particularly their Sunday best, in the Shumadija district of Serbia and in Montenegro were especially interesting.

Every day clothes, either in the mountains or the towns, are not outstanding except among the Musselman women, whose pantaleon-like skirts and head covering veils are mysterious and have something of the mystery of the East.

In fiesta garb, however, the girls and women of the Shumadija are an attractive sight, with full cut, accordion pleated skirt of dark figured or plaid homespun, belted at the waist over a soft coarse white linen blouse with long flowing sleeves embroidered at the cuffs and neck. An apron of contrasting homespun adds a rich note of color or perhaps it is white linen embroidered to match the blouse. Next a bedice of velvet in some solid color, embroidered with silver or gold, laces across the front. Caps of figured silk are sometimes worn.

Stockings among the larger villages and cities are generally silk and with these a kind of pump or sandal is worn, often patent leather which is a very popular leather for men's shoes also.

With the peasant girl black stockings of wool reaching to the knee are always worn. It is the sign of a virgin. One of our chaps who was given a pair was the butt of much merriment among the Serbs when he appeared in them until he learned the significance.

In Montenegro milady plumes herself. Her bodice is solidly ~~ma~~ worked in gold. She wears a long sleeveless sky blue felt coat and on her head a mantilla like scarf.

These two outfits stand out in my memory. Not being a fashion expert or unduly observant, probably many details are wrong, but if so, I apologize. No offense, only admiration for the beautiful, is intended.

~~xx~~ We had a real Thanksgiving that night as Bera's wife and daughter had also arrived during our absence and songs and dancing to the music of the harmonica continued long after Bera and his family excused themselves.

I had remarked so often that to me the Serb was an Irishman, a Kentuckian and an Indian all rolled together and in a spirit of instructive nonsense undertook to do an Indian war dance. Seen the crowd was following like a Conga line, knives were bared and pistols barked. As the party was getting a trifle rough, Marko and I went to our quarters leaving the field to the dihardes.

The next morning only a single chair graced the emptiness of the dining room. Someone sheepishly explained that the rest of the furniture was being repaired. Regular American Legion Convention!

I admired a silver Chetnik ring of Cvetic's and with the impulsive generosity of the Serb it was given me. I partially salved my conscience by autographing a five dollar bill with Lincoln's picture on it and giving it to him. The utter simple generosity of these people who will give you their last crust of bread or the shirt off their back (if they like you) is a trait that might well be copied elsewhere. Of course, if they don't like you it is a slight matter to get rid of you.

It seemed a good idea to transcribe briefly in my small diary the potentiality of the Chetniks before making my dash to the coast and arrange for destruction of my voluminous notes in the event of capture.

The British, taken by the Bulgarians and Germans to date, had had a very unpleasant time before being executed and the fact they had been in uniform had made no difference whatever.

Lord Selby, who had been with Keserevic for a time before going north to attempt to reconcile the Partizans and Chetniks, had reportedly been captured by the Nedic or Gestapo under rather suspicious circumstances near Belgrade. His companion, a chap called Robertson, recruited in New York by the British, was next heard of with the Partizans in Bosnia.

On being questioned by the Gestapo, our information indicated Selby had suddenly picked up a chair and used it to advantage on several Gestapo heads before a bullet concluded any further attempts to torture information out of him.

Five other men taken in the Morava Valley by the Bulgarians after a running gun battle in which all were desperately wounded, were simply shot in the back of the head by a brutish officer and kicked to the side of the road. He probably will never reach a court for trial. One of the poor chaps lived for five hell wracked days before cashing in.

Finally with Marko's help I summarized the strength observed in the some 25 of 100 Serbian counties. We had seen with our own eyes the larger part of 10,395 armed men and 238 officers. Only 280 of this total had automatic weapons, the rest being armed with every variety of Continental firearm. Approximately 60 % of these men were trained professional soldiers, and they had an average of less than 30 rounds of ammunition per man.

I had also seen a fair part of 71,767 unarmed but trained men, most of whom had seen actual combat or had spent two years in the regular army, in training previous to 1941.

On this basis, if arms could be obtained from the Allies, Mihailovic could put in the field an army trained and hardened for war, of over 300,000 fit for combat. This would be sufficient to paralyze the Germans and Bulgarians in Serbia, close once and for all the traffic to and from Greece and deny precious minerals such as copper, antimony, lead, chrome and zinc from the Ibar and Morava Valleys.

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This force knew the horrors of reprisal, all of them, practically, having had at least some member of their family tortured or murdered or hung. Properly armed they could take ~~xxx~~ to the field, an irresistible weapon of destruction, not worrying about reprisals; their only job to make sure that no enemy remained to wreak vengeance on the defenceless. Here was an avalanche building for a thousand years.

To the greater part of the Americans in Serbia the Partizan was merely a bogey man in the west, and the hate these Serbs held for him appeared to be largely due underneath to the Ustashi terrors and the fact that the Ustashi had in some cases been permitted to join the Partizans.

In Cairo I had discussed the reported friction with Major Lynn Farrish, who had preceded me by a week into Tito's headquarters and the matter did not appear unsurmountable. We had made a date to be with each other at Thanksgiving ~~time~~ time. This date was never kept, worse luck, and I had unknowingly said good-bye to Lynn at Cairo.

Lynn Farrish was a prince. An oil engineer from California, world traveled, he had married a Canadian girl and when things happened at Dunkerque volunteered as a private in the Canadian army.

Powerfully built, he had starred on the Stanford team and later was chosen for the Olympic Team in France in 1926. Upon entering the Canadian Army he was sent overseas immediately and within a few months was transferred to the Royal Engineers and sent to Persia. With ~~th~~ a gang of some 3000 coolies and no tools but pick, shovels and hammers he built 150 miles of the 1100 mile stretch of road between Abadan and Teheran.

Wanting excitement he had himself transferred to a British outfit specializing in same and entered extended training. Unfortunately at the Parachute School in Haifa he broke his shoulder and I entered training just as he was able to begin again.

Our job was hot and time was the essence. Haifa is 24 hours by rail from Cairo and one trip on what passes for a train will cure you of ever wanting to make another. It looked to me like a good idea to hook a ride by air. I found an RAF pilot who would take us but Lynn said no something might happen and we might not arrive on time. So --- we went by rail!

The train was hot, crowded and filthy. We finally got into a compartment with a very likeable Englishman and we decided to occupy against all comers. Then at night two of us could sit leaving the other seat for the third chap to stretch out on. Lynn won first tess and laid down smiling happily. But not for long. Bed-bugs and other vermin made sitting up a pleasure.

A truck met us at Haifa and we rattled and bumped six miles to a tent camp with the sonorous and Biblical sounding name of Ramat David. Five days of up and doing were ahead of us.

Five French Canadian and one English "other ranks" were put into our "jump" class and we were told to be ready for an intensive course the following morning.

Lynn and I drew a fairsized Indian wall tent with floor and looked around and located a couple of sandfly nets after seeing the wide barred mosquito netting provided. It's worth taking precautions against sand flies. The bite of the tiny insect is really painful and sand fly fever is very unpleasant.

We turned in early, put out the light and lay talking.

Lynn "You know, Al, here we are, grown up men, forty-three and forty-four years old, supposed to have horse sense, here to learn parachuting. I never even ride in a plane if I can help it, ~~gee~~ many trips over the Andes."

Al, "Oh! ho! so that's why you wanted to come on that goldam train?"

Lynn, "Well, we're here in time, anyway, but aren't we a couple of dam fools?"

Al, "you know, my kid took his parachute work in the Navy a year ago and I was trying to figure what ~~a~~ mented member of the family he took after. Now I know."

The next morning we oldsters, for the English Sergeant was twenty-three, but the youngest French Canadian was 36, were put under a very cocky by capable Staff Sergeant named Gascoigne who gave us a physical workout that made my hardening-up exercises at Kasr El Nil in Cairo seem like a pink tea.

The next four days we jumped and Lynn and I sweat gallons. To my dying day I'll remember two reservoirs of varying blue just before the target light came on.

It was windy at Ramat David, by nine in the morning jumping had to be discontinued because high wind causes many accidents to the parachutists. Then at night the wind dies down again and when you are airborne it is like coming down into black velvet dimly seen with the lighted target shining like an illuminated electric switch in a dark room.

Being the eldest I jumped first and was permitted the dubious honor of seating myself just to the rear of the open side door watching the ground pattern getting small, then larger, as we leveled off for the target and the DC3 throttled down to a mere 120 miles and hour.

We had spent hours learning to pack a chute and how to adjust it so there would be comfort to your shoulders when suspended from the envelope; how to operate the ingenious quick release on your chest built somewhat like the dial on a safe with arrows pointing the directions "open and shut". The overwhelming advantages of this safety device cannot be overestimated. When you are airborne and have taken the shock of your chute opening, you merely turn the dial in the direction "open", tap the flat knob, and three of the four straps held by it fall free, leaving you adequately suspended by your shoulders. Then you withdraw the leg straps through your web belting and on hitting the ground, throw your upper body in the direction of the wind in a twisting motion, and your chute is carried off your shoulders and you are ready for immediate action.

This device has probably saved thousands of lives of men who, if having to unbuckle or cut straps from their body to disengage the chute would either be carried along the ground by a runaway chute or be shot while freeing themselves from the harness.

We wore a curious helmet of sponge rubber supposed to guard your head from injury on landing and chewed gum to keep the muscles of the neck pliable, otherwise some men suffer severe stiff necks from sweating out over the target.

As the plane approaches the target area the British dispatcher checks your chute for fit and the twine lacings over the envelope to see they have not been disturbed, hooks your long cable webbing to a cable on the floor of the plane, and gives you a thumbs up for a good landing.

There are two lights over the door operated by the pilot; as you approach the target the red light goes on and you plant yourself in the doorway, hands on the sides of the door to give yourself a good push out, legs braced one back of the other like a sprinter, keeping your eyes glued on the lights. Green appears and your muscles project you into space, your cable pays out and tears the twine lacing and your freed chute bellies out and your next conscious thought after jumping is a sudden cessation of the terrific speed plus the friction of the wind.

Many things may happen as you jump. A hand out too far may spin you so you must unwind on the way down, which gives you little opportunity to brace yourself

for landing. Or an outstretched arm may catch in a shroud line causing your envelope to partially collapse and carry you down too fast, or opening fully, jerk your arm from the socket. It is best to grab your trouser seams as you jump or flex your arms smartly to your chest.

There is little shock on opening as the shroud lines pay out as the chute opens, the reverse of the American chute which in the old days was very uncomfortable upon opening, and the collapsing method of landing, based on the principle that relaxing and rolling are more fitted to the structural makeup of a man than taking the terrific shock of landing and tumbling.

American paratroops now collapse on landing, with, I imagine a far lesser extent of injuries.

On being airborne, the human impulse is to spread the legs; they must be held together and extended so this cuts down oscillation, another evil chance as it might frustrate your efforts to get your feet on the ground first, instead landing smack on your back-side, stomach or head.

The gratification on your initial jump of finding yourself airborne is tremendous. The man doesn't live who can be indifferent to the thought processes that admit to a chute failure. As a result, your second jump is probably a pleasure and these to follow, work, attempting to gain good form, to steer where you wish to go by pulling shrouds in that direction, learning to turn just so much so you will be in a favorable landing position, and lastly, begin thinking about what ~~parix~~ you're going to do when you hit the ground because all this training, all these tries, have been simply for the purpose of getting you somewhere, inaccessible to foot, truck or air plane, to fight. If you are potted in the air or as you land, all the expense and effort in your training chalks up a big zero.

Our training was completed without accident or casualties. The little French Canadian who followed me down the first time, gasped out "My heart, she go flop in my mouth", and on my own last jump, at night, in my efforts to get the string out quickly so we wouldn't be carried far and wide, let go too soon and fetched up in a mass of thistles which took several days to dig out of my posterior.

On the last night, Lynn and I bought the bar at the Officer's Club and had our training chaps over. Training was over and we felt like celebrating.

The next morning I negotiated a ride on a DC3 and Lynn went along, unwilling but agreeable, bound for Cairo and adventure.

On arrival at Cairo we found Lynn was to leave immediately and that his transfer to the American Army was effected.

While ~~he~~ he sweated out his gear, I combed the town for an American uniform, finally locating him a tropical wersted, his only item of American uniform until in December, he came out of Jugland to report.

He did a magnificent job inside and when I learned he had been killed in Greece in a plane crash later on, knew I had lost a great ~~frst~~ friend.

The 23rd. of December came with no word from the Minister. A courier brought us a message from Captain Bob Wade who it appeared was leaving with his Submission which had been with Keserovic in the Keponic Mountains five days travel to the east.

* This Mission had formerly been headed by Lord Selby, who had been captured by the Germans near Belgrade and reportedly killed.

Wade advised us he was pushing on to another village, but if we cared to join him he would be glad to have company.

Marke, Mansfield and I immediately left word for Bora, saddled up and finally after dark came to the village.

We found Capt. Wade a stocky, blue-eyed, ruddy-faced Britisher with the grin of a mischievous kid. He had with him a little Australian called Ross who was an escaped prisoner of war; Roberts, a very capable radio man and Sergeant Jouney, a French Englishman or an English Frenchman from the Isle of Jersey. Two Yugoslavs who were afraid their throats would be cut as Keserovic hadn't liked them very well, completed the party. They were a noisy happy lot crowded in a little straw filled room.

Wade simply explained he had been ordered to get out of the country if he could and make his way to the headquarters of the Second Korpus of the Partizan Army who had been instructed to evacuate such parties. With the sudden pickup of supplies to the Partizans Keserovic was becoming uncooperative as were some of the other Chetnik leaders, blaming England for turncoating after the promises made by King George, Churchill and Eden.

The little party was very desirous of having Marke in particular go along, if he could, as he knew the country through which they were to pass and the Americans were invited to go along for additional fire power.

Marke did not hesitate. Two and a half years of being on his own in the country had been enough. Most of the time he had been in peasant dress and a request to Cairo to send him some British dress had brought him a carefully packaged container filled with tennis clothes. They forgot to include the racquet and balls! Marke's language at times was highly adequate and he outdid himself on this occasion.

We had finally managed to pick up the jacket and pants of British battle dress plus an overcoat that fitted his great frame and one pair of motorcycle boots, size 12 had displaced his spanci.

We Americans had several things yet to collect from the Minister and I

finally decided to leave Mansfield behind with Bora to pick these up, and come on with the cheta Mihailovic was to provide for safety in the long trek to the coast. I would go ahead with Wade and Marko. With our small number and stripped down equipment we should be able to get through the layer of Bulgarians and Germans; and the Partizans should not be too unfriendly with all the Lend Lease aid they were receiving.

I felt worried about Bora. He would have to return his family to a safe place and placate the Minister for letting me out of his sight. However, I wrote a long letter to Mihailovic explaining that it was my duty and also possibly to his advantage for me to be on my way.

I said au revoir to Mansfield, who had performed in an outstanding manner and who had become like a younger brother, and the new adventure was on.

We took stock of weapons. Each man had a Mill's hand grenade, adequate for neutralization; there were two American Enfields, a Sten, a Schmeizer and each man had at least one pistol. We had four horses, two riding and two pack, and everyone was rarin' to go.

The next three days we traveled sixteen to twenty hours a day, avoiding towns and taking refuge at night in isolated farmhouses. The village straza (guard) were suspicious but I had sufficient autographed pictures of many Chetnik leaders and it was known I was on a trip of inspection. Lack of bodyguard was explained with the fact that the two Yugoslavs with us knew the country and we were moving fast to ~~finish~~ finish before the snow got too deep for travel.

We passed along a ridge on Christmas day and from there on a parallel road, counted approximately 400 Bulgarians. They hailed us and we answered them very impolitely, knowing they couldn't reach us. As shots they are lousy!

In one village the Pope was very suspicious because we outtalked him when he called the local Chetnik leader, so were not detained.

Toward night we were passing single file along a trail at the edge of a pasture sloping to the precipitous cliffs overhanging a mountain stream when my horse's pack slipped. I had spent hours attempting to show the two Jugs how to pack properly and now they attempted to right it by main strength and managed to upset the stocky beast sending him rolling down the slope headed for the river with packs and paraphrenalia flying in all directions. He was brought up short by a little tree almost at the edge of the cliff, unhurt; but we lost our only can of butter which Wade

had carefully saved for months and the hand generator for the radio battery was severely damaged.

Later that night, about 11 o'clock we stopped at a farmhouse, bought a lamb, slaughtered it and roasted the front quarters for our Christmas dinner. Rather late but most welcome.

Christmas with us isn't the same as in Serbia, where it is celebrated Jan. 7th.

We were on the road again the next morning at eight after some four hours sleep and the people in the country were terrified, saying both Germans and Bulgarians were very near. All day we heard desultory firing, some of it rather large caliber. About six o'clock we were able to get a guide to take us on to the next village on the other side of the mountains and by luck, heard at a farmhouse on the route that soldiers were just ahead of us in bivouac. They might be Partizans.

We fixed Marko up with Bob Wade's cap, his own black beret not looking very military, and he and the guide went up the road talking loudly so they would be challenged more quickly and maybe able to make a run for it if it was the Bosche. We left our animals saddled for instant flight and descended upon a terrified peasant family in order to get in out of the deadly cold. I pinned American flags on the shoulders of the Yugoslavs so the Partizans wouldn't execute them as Chetniks. We also bought some bread and dried meat from the farmer to assuage a terrific hunger.

About half past ten Marko's guide brought us a note saying it was the Partizans, that they were quite friendly and to come ahead. The peasants said a fervent farewell and we pushed on, this time walking on air.

At two in the morning we contacted a Partizan patrol, who looked, spoke and acted as the Chetniks I had just left and arrived at the brigade headquarters. Here I saw a good many women among the troops carrying machine guns or rifles in patrol parties or else acting as clerks or typists.

The brigade commander had retired but greeted us pleasantly and told us we would be taken on to division headquarters as soon as we had rested.

By seven we were ~~sxxx~~ again on the road, very hungry and at noon reached the little village of Negbina not too far from the good sized village of Nova Varosh.

There was an air of tenseness and vigilance combined with discipline which set these people apart from the Chetniks with their easy courtesy and professional discipline. This appeared to indicate at first glimpse a hardy fighting spirit, and indeed these people had been more or less continuously fighting for two years.

We found out that German pressure had forced them from Bosnia and they were in the Sandzak, first, because the Germans were poor mountaineers and food was scarce, and second, to see how the area bordering Serbia would receive them.

The Serbs were sullen and resentful of them and the fact I lost forty pounds in weight in the two and a half months I was with the Partizans might be taken to indicate that the peasants were not digging into their stored food to provide for the Forces of Liberation.

On arrival Marke, Wade and I were invited to dine with the division commander and the komisar. We found them both very intelligent men. They said they had received instructions to forward any mission personnel to the headquarters of the Second Korpus commanded by General Peka Dapcevic. However, it was not known what enemy might be encountered on the way and we would have to wait until a party now on its way from Kelasin, arrived.

That meal was rather good and all went well until they began to question us about the Chetniks. We told them then that we were coming out of Serbia on orders from the Allied commanders, that we could not divulge any information concerning the Chetniks or enter into any discussion as to political questions. In the matter of the enemy which we could identify as Germans, Bulgarians or other Axis troops, we would give them what information we had outside of Serbia proper inasmuch as Serbia was regarded as garrisoned by Chetniks as part of the Allied forces and any incursions into that territory on the part of the Partizans would only serve to precipitate bloody civil war and relieve the German situation, which was not desired. We felt that a definite understanding in the beginning was far better than leaving these people to believe they might obtain information which we could not in honor or inclination divulge.

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skull on the left side blown away. Not being advanced further than first aid in the medical profession and equally uninformed in technical French, I ~~did~~ did not absorb too much of his dissertation but I gathered he had developed a method of bone growth to close the wound rather than by the use of a plate. The young woman had been partially paralyzed in the beginning but was making rapid recovery of function and only a small throbbing section remained of the great hole in her head.

Originally impressed into service by the Ustashi, the Partizans had taken a town in order to get the doctor and his family away. He was not a Communist but was definitely a surgeon of great ability, tending the desperately wounded with infinite tenderness and operating under the most appalling conditions. I would place him in the first ten of the characters I admired the most in the length and breadth of Yugoslavia.

The party from the headquarters of Dapcevic arrived on the 2nd of January and daily Marko, Wade and I pressed for departure only to be put off.

A Yugoslav who had spent some time in America and had joined the British Army and later was sent into the Partizans as a radio operator was constantly with our enlisted men. He had been left with this command for about a year becoming a Partizan of Partizans. Sergeant Jouney finally got him in his cups (a practice greatly frowned on by the Partizans) and he disclosed the fact that we were being held for information and our radio.

That was the last straw. We were getting used to being gaped at by the peasants as these strange Englishmen who were now only fighting with Tito, but we drew the line on their other desires and told the new commander who had arrived with the Second Korpus party that either he^f would furnish us guides or we would go on alone and to hell with him.

He agreed to begin travel towards the Lim River and its junction with the Uvac at Rudo where we would have to make our crossing.

This necessitated considerable northerly travel and we were headed for Southern Montenegro but the commander explained all other bridges on the Lim were held by Germans or destroyed and indeed the bridge at Rudo had been partially wrecked by the Germans but foot passengers could get across and a ford up the river was not too swift for animals if a rope line was used. It seemed the only thing to do.

Came a rapid succession of villages with attacks from the enemy every few days. We weren't given much warning and all of us narrowly missed being hit as

we pulled out, well in the rear of the headquarter's persennel.

Then came Jablanica, a beautiful, previously wealthy little village set in a rather extended "polje" or flat alluvial plain. We approached from the east down a rough rocky mountain trail between two great peaks. As we ~~xxx~~ drew near, but before we could see the actual buildings of the place, firing broke out and we halted as the Dalmatian and Shumadija brigades went forward to investigate. Finally we went ahead as ricochets in that dam place were just as bad as being fired on direct.

As we approached the main north and south road lined with a few stores, we were able to see four dead Germans on the ground and five or six more pounding south with Partizans following. Every so often one of the Germans would stop and send a few carefully spaced bursts of machine gun fire at the pursuers, who would drop on their bellies and fire furiously with their Berettas and Stens.

There was firing continuing from the two mountains straight ahead. To the north of the junction with the main road our road swung west across a little creek continuing to the north of the right mountain and swinging gradually to the north west. Until we reached that point, a matter of a mile and a half, we would be under fire although the range would be rather distant, perhaps six hundred yards.

Sergeant Jouny and Roberts were next ahead and behind me and we all noticed four men from one of the brigades climbing the mountain to the right which commanded the west bearing of the road. All this time troops were deploying north and south to encircle the two mountains and they moved fast and in perfect manœuvre.

As we came opposite the four men who at a guess were about seven hundred yards away, the scary whine of overrange bullets suddenly changed to pops, which means someone has your range and isn't missing you by more than a few feet at most. We forced our horse to lie down all three got behind her. Jouny bursts out with "These dam P's are firing at us"!

We had nothing to fire back with with any accuracy. They were evidently using a scope sight and in a little while we forced ourselves to continue with me trying to hurry the mare, Jelina, who, good old Army trained gal, refused to be perturbed and certainly wasn't going to be hurried.

CHAPTER XVIII

That night at Rudo where we were to part from the division and go on with a small group to Kelasin some seventy five miles away over the worst mountain ranges outside Albania and in the dead of winter.

Rudo had been a lovely place. In my first few weeks with the Chetniks we had remained for a few days four miles north and had ventured into the town daily to buy supplies and food. The large bridge just west of the junction of the Uvac with the Lim had been destroyed when the Chetniks left and the Germans had been unable to follow us in force although our departure was much accelerated.

We said goodbye to the division commander and listened to a report of the days fighting. They had killed 40 Germans and 30 Chetniks, taken 15 Chetniks prisoners while losses were only 4 dead and 16 wounded. They had also taken 2 mortars, 3 light machine guns and about 8,000 rounds of ammunition.

I told him it was a beautiful encircling movement, as finely executed as I had ever seen and that he was to be congratulated.

"However", I said, "your four men were recognized who shot at our party and here's how close they came", and I showed him the hole in the left pocket of my battle dress. He had a most peculiar look on his face.

I continued "The loss of one of our party considering the fact that Chetniks were attacking us would have been wonderful propaganda, wouldn't it? May I see your Chetnik prisoners?"

"No, they are not available", he cried.

"I thought not."

We left fifteen gold pieces (about \$300) with the Kommissar for the hospital and set out across the river, fording our animals through the swift current, getting nicely drenched in the process.

Our companions were largely Italian artillerymen and signalmen on their way back to the Korpus headquarters for some purpose we were unable to discover. We could not bring ourselves to forget that yesterday these men had been on the side of the Axis and the Yugoslavs, both Chetniks and partisans regarded them with contempt.

We made about six hours out of Rudo stopping for the night at Ustibar. We were quartered with an elderly woman, a widow, whose house was the most immaculate I had seen in Yugoslavia, keeping house like my Aunt Hat, who swooned at the sight of a speck of dust.

She was greatly afraid when we first entered her house but our assurances that we were English and Americans and were paying our way finally gained her confidence and trust.

Her husband had been a gendarme in the community for thirty years, had fought in World War I, and, when the country fell in 41 he felt he must stay on dispensing the law as he had always done. He was highly regarded in the community. The Partizans had rounded up the officials of the town two months before and executed the lot. Now the riff raff of the town were in charge, so the old lady said.

The poor thing was in desperate straits and I managed to buy a blanket from her for the road for a gold piece. The plight of helpless old people in a country beset by all kinds of warring elements is not pretty.

Gradually she lost some of the terror inspired by the Partizans and brought to light the interesting information that the week previous a Chetnik cheta of about sixty men came through the village, travelling very fast, headed for Rudo and the Coast and that the party contained ten or twelve English.

After making discreet inquiries in the village we became convinced it must have been Colonel Bailey and Lt. Mansfield with probably some other members of the British Mission with Mihailevic. If this supposition was correct, either a canal had been opened or some bold soul, probably Lukacevic, was making one, traveling fast and counting on knowledge of the country to filter the party through the assorted Germans, Bulgarians and Partizans.

At the end of February we had word from Cairo that Bailey and Mansfield had reached the Coast after incredible hardship and been picked up by a British gunboat near Dubrovnik.

With that information and subsequent discourse with Mansfield in America, the jig saw fell into place. At the time of the Partizan attack on Ivanjica, the Partizans assured us their plan included an attack on an antimony mine about an hours march out of the town proper. As I have stated before we were not permitted to go to Ivanjica in spite of the fact Partizans occupied the town for three days, bringing back with them huge stores of white flour. They claimed that Chetniks had fallen upon the column making the attack on the antimony mine and their forces had been compelled to withdraw after killing several Chetniks. This was Colonel Bailey's party and they certainly were not looking to attack, only to get through the country as

fast as their legs would carry them. One sure policy appears to be; only to believe what you see yourself.

At the time Marke told the Partizan commander that in his opinion the destruction of the antimony mine would have visited real loss on the Germans whereas looting a town merely visited hardship on an already long suffering people.

CHAPTER XIX

We came into real mountains now as we felt it wiser to stay off the main roads. Priboj was held by the Chetniks and Prijepolje and Pljevlja by the Germans so we slogged it out over the high mountains, crossing the much traveled road between the last two named towns at a little wide place in the road called Jabuka (apple) around midnight of the 25th.

Outside of losing track of the days and being unable to contact Cairo because of it, which was a very helpless feeling, we were making good time, and, when we did finally after several days get on the beam again, we were ordered to proceed to Berane, on the Lim River just above Albania where there was an air field which would be used to evacuate us.

Our Straza numbered twenty, all peasants, who looked, acted and sang as the Chetniks had and after leaving Jabuka tension fell away, although the going became harder and harder and food was almost impossible to obtain.

This was the Sandzak of Montenegro, terribly hit by war; and, for one period of three days in succession we passed burnt farmhouse after burnt farmhouse with all living beings destroyed. The haystacks were two or three years old which indicated the time the depredation had occurred. The inhabitants in this part of the world could not be conquered by the Germans or Italians and the few still living were fighting with the Chetniks.

In turn we stayed the night at Brvenica and Hecvina heading for Salovic where we would encounter the main road from Pljevlja to Bijelo Polje which was reported held by the Partizans. The going was getting worse and worse and we often

were able to travel only a kilometer an hour, which makes any distance immeasurable. We did set sixteen kilometers for a daily accomplishment and held strictly to it.

Occasionally we were able to buy a little dried beef or ham, smoked in the rafters of a Koliba, a rude windowless shepherd's hut and were able to obtain a little cornmeal which we could make into Katchamak by boiling in water, but of potatoes, milk or kajmak there was none. Even beans were lacking. We were beginning to look like a bunch of desert rats and the beards we let grow to shield our faces from the ten below zero weather did nothing to improve our appearance.

The animals suffered worse than we did as we were able to buy only a little hay which was not enough food as in that weather corn or oats were vitally necessary. They had to be led most of the distance carrying only our musettes and dispatch cases.

One evening, dead tired, I mounted Jelina on a fairly good stretch of road along the side of the mountain. I had given her a tiny crust of corn bread, which she relished as most horses would sugar and she pranced like a colt just as the road narrowed down to less than a yard in width. Both right legs slipped off and landed luckily on a narrow shelf several feet below as I pitched over her left shoulder. Slowly, with scarcely a tremble she pulled up first one leg then the other to the road and we went on with me walking. The fifteen hundred feet to the bottom of the mountain made me slightly shaky in the knees.

Jelina was an amazing beast, perfectly cool under fire or in an emergency and on a good road could walk five miles an hour, very fast for a horse. She was eleven years old, born in the stables of the Royal Guard, had been taken by the Gestapo, then by the Chetniks before her purchase by Major Selby. She was gentle, easy to keep, had a perfect trot and a very near approach to character.

We expected to make Salovic the night of the 23th but about 9 o'clock stopped in a nearer village, dead tired. The people were friendly which seemed strange until a delegation of three old men came in and addressed me in rusty English. They had all lived in America, working in Gary, Indiana in the steel mills. They had returned to Montenegro, bought farms, expecting to enjoy the fruits of their labor. Now, however, between the Germans, Italians, Chetniks and Partizans, they had nothing and as one of them said "We would give our immortal souls to get back to America." Montenegro is a desperately poor country at best and three years of war had sufficed to pauperize even the few well to do. I asked them if they preferred Chetniks or

Partizans and they simply replied "We want only peace and an end of this terror.

There was a telephone line reaching to Salevic and we called the Partizan headquarters there and learned they had service on to Kelasin. We made arrangements for them to notify the British Mission at Kelasin that we would be in Salevic the next morning and for some one to be available on the phone and turned in.

At Salevic as arranged Marke called Hunter the officer in charge of the Mission and I could see he was rapidly losing his temper as he listened. Finally he turned to us and explained that Dapcevic was ordering us to Kelasin, a terribly round about way to Berane which was only fourteen hours by way of Bijelo Polje.

Marke returned to the phone "Tell Dapcevic we obey orders from Cairo and they ordered us to go to Berane. We certainly take no orders from these people.

Hunter then went on to say that having been with the Chetniks we were under suspicion and it was necessary to propitiate Dapcevic.

We were becoming more and more angry but when we learned that tremendous loads of supplies were being received at Kelasin we decided to shelve our pride and irritation and see what a little food would taste like. We did decide also to have no mercy on any chocolate or cigarettes that might be in Hunter's hands.

There were two hard days travel ahead of us with the country standing straight up and down. At Mojkevac the half way point, the town's people fed us and more former Americans came to talk and laugh and see a little of America in me although by now we all looked like something the cat had dragged in and our table manners were obscene.

The last sixteen kilometers to Kelasin were very difficult but the end of our trip was in sight and the country turned into a beautiful fairyland of white forests and glittering peaks. On the ground we would flounder off the three foot thick path of ice and weakness compelled us to rest often. Pack trains of food, clothing, arms and ammunition passed us continuously bound for the Sandzak Partizan headquarters between Mojkevac and Salevic.

The ordeal was finally ended and the British were as unfeignedly glad to see us as we were them and an American Naval Officer with them Lt. Holt Green of Charleston, S. C. brought close to me wide, busy streets, Coca Cola, school kids playing, juicy steak and french fries, innerspring mattresses and gun and knife

hung on the wall to look at; with other nostalgic memories. He met me with a bar of chocolate and a pack of Camels. Marko and I had finished with American cigarettes the 15th of November.

Tea was brought and tasted like nectar of the gods. We had brewed our last two weeks before and my saccharine tablets were only a memory.

I spied a beautiful pair of South African shoes well-heeled under the bed and as my right toe had been on the ground the last three days, tried them on. They fitted perfectly and I told Major Hunter, who owned them, I would send him a pair from Bari or Cairo.

CHAPTER XX

After a little Marko and I accompanied Hunter and Green to Dapcevic's headquarters, a rather pretentious stone house formerly belonging to a wealthy family. He greeted us pleasantly in good French and introduced us to his huge Chief of Staff who immediately excused himself, taking Hunter and Green with him.

Dapcevic was under the impression Marko was Colonel Bailey and began talking about Bailey's trip with Lukacevic to Berane the previous September as if that was a very treacherous thing to do.

It appeared that the announcement of Armistice with the Italians, which came by BBC September 8, five days after the armistice was consummated, broke upon the British Mission, then under Colonel Bailey, as well as the Chetniks without preliminary warning. Evidently the Germans were forewarned by the Italians because they were able to disarm a great percentage of the Italians in Western Yugoslavia. It would have meant a great deal to the Chetniks to have these arms.

The following day the Mission was instructed by Cairo to do everything possible to obtain the surrender of the Italian garrisons in their vicinity.

After consultation, Colonel Bailey, as British representative and Lukacevic of the Royal Yugoslav Army as Mihailovic's, set out for Berane in Montenegro where was located the headquarters of the Italian Venezia Division, whose forces were dis-
positioned in Berane and Priboj on the Lim River. What happened at Berane was interesting in the light of future events..

Bailey, as a representative of the Allied Command, decided against disarming

the Italians, provided they chose to support the offensive against the Germans.

Lukacevic, with the practicality of the guerilla, was for disarming them and placing the arms in the hands of the Chetniks, who could be counted on to use them. He had the Slav's contempt for the Italian as a fighter.

The upshot of it was that after much debate the Italians signed up with Mihailovic and Bailey and Lukacevic departed, leaving a few men for civil police work.

In February, five months later, I was in Kelasi going to Berane on my way out of the country. It was now in the hands of the Partizans who had attacked Berane without warning in October killing many Italians and forcing the rest into surrender. They were disarmed except for a few whom the Partizans felt might be counted on to fight. They became as the sons of Ham in the Bible, hewers of wood and drawers of water. The officers and headquarters personnel with the signalmen appeared fairly well dressed and fed but the great majority were the most wretched looking human beings I have ever seen. Gaunt, ragged cadavers living on a ration half that of the Comrades of the Partizans, typhus infected, without means for immunization; they died like flies while serum from Italy which might have saved their lives and the lives of the peasant population, was administered only to the wearers of the Star.

Dapcevic bitterly assailed Hudson as a Britisher for Bailey's responsibility in drawing the Italians into the Chetnik fold and calling on the population to join them in the fight against the Germans. Tito's utter disregard for the Allied policy in permitting the Italians to retain their arms was of no importance to the Partizans and Tito, who was the darling of the Russias.

Marko simply told him the trip was ordered by the Allied Command which was sufficient authority for any of us, told him he had once made a trip with Dapcevic during the days when it was good form to fight Germans and Italians.

Dapcevic suddenly thawed and from then on was a charming person, helpful and considerate. He was rather a medium sized, sparsely built man carrying himself as a soldier, as indeed he was.

Originally from Zagreb he went to Spain and rose high in the International Brigade. When Yugoslavia fell he became a guerilla, eventually coming under Tito's leadership. He was a magnificent tactician and a courageous fighter and would rank first or second in the Balkans as a fighter against the Germans. He said he was not a Communist as was apparently borne out in a quarrel with Tito the following spring

finish off the Germans, chase out the Italians and call a halt to the civil war which was sweeping the country like a Hatfield-McCoy feud multiplied a thousandfold; and "Bring us back our King, God bless him"

Our whole party, looking fairly presentable by now attended what turned out to be a banquet the next day. Dapcevic had an excellent cook and the meal would have satisfied a gourmet. I noticed most Miracevic, the headquarters commandant, an old regular; the Komisar whose name slips me although he was a person of much charm and intelligence; and an old Russian, resident of Yugoslavia since the World War I who had been with American troops at Vladivostok. The old Russian spoke a curious mixture of poor English and French to me but had a very refreshing sense of humor and an irresistible smile.

After the meal Dapcevic spoke of some badly wounded personnel at Borane he wished to evacuate to Italy with us and hoped we would not be too long delayed. He also said arrangements had been made to take us by way of Andrijevice in camions.

We spent the rest of the day listening to the Mission's Hallicroft, even dragging in Boston. The electric lights furnished by the ~~the~~ repaired light plant flickered slightly but were dazzling after months of candle and lamp light. Marko and I had each picked up an ingenious carbide signalling lantern from among the German stores at Visegrad but had been unable to get fuel for it most of the time.

At ten the next morning we said goodbye to Hunter and Dapcevic and au revoir to Green who was to wait for a couple of American airmen who had bailed out after being shot down over Mostar.

CHAPTER XXI

Our camion was a huge Fiat and looking over the motley crowd of Italians and Partizans, I failed to see where our party was going to ride. Wade, Marko and I finally clambered into the cab to sit two on the motor and one in a seat, leaving the balance to swarm over the incumbents in the rear which they did with soul-satisfying curses.

That was a trip! Everything was wrong with the machine and the load would of course have strained the power of a brand new car, but, by unloading at

every turn we managed to make 34 kilometers to Andrijevica by eight that night.

It was a journey never to be forgotten, climbing for fully 20 kilometers, getting out to push at every hairpin curve, filling the vacuum with oily petrol every mile or so because of non-working pumps; jabbering Italians offering poor advice to the driver until finally, when we reached the divide from which the ascent began, I climbed out with Journey and we covered in ten minutes by a headlong path down the mountain what took the camion 45 minutes to negotiate.

I was glad we had broken away. In a little house by the road I ran into an old lumberman who had followed his trade in the United States for twenty years. He had been back in Montenegro for fifteen or sixteen years but his eulogy on America would rank with that of any professional. His comments on civil war in Yugoslavia would not be fit to print but ~~in~~ his main argument was that just a few individuals with unholy ideas of power in their bosoms were destroying a people that would amount to something if let alone to build roads, raise families to be educated and be free of the machinations of the British, the Italians, the Austrians and the Russians for once. He was a refreshing character; massive, breeding, hospitable and vitriolic.

We boarded the camion again, and wished we hadn't. Down-grade hairpins, brakes not too good and ^a perspiring Italian driver who appeared bereft of judgement. I thought of a saying of my father-in-law, "I have only one neck and ~~that's~~ that's not long enough to tie." But we finally arrived.

They had waited supper for us and were as friendly as the people in Serbia had been. The commander was an old regular soldier (I had met six now among the Partizans) and this was an outpost ~~in~~ with Pech, a German stronghold, only 45 kilometers away. He controlled the road to Berane, an hour's journey north.

During the meal the Partizan band, mostly from Split up the ~~Dakona~~ Dalmatian Coast serenaded us with Sousa's music. Their time was good and being all dressed in gray native costumes they presented a fine appearance. A suite of Dalmatian tunes especially ^{were} were very beautiful.

The Brigade Information Officer, a chap named Mile Vlahovic, was a most interesting character. He claimed to be an American, born in the West of naturalized parents. He made a visit to Montenegro when he became 21 right after World War I. Life was pleasant among his people's people, and he married a beautiful mountain girl who gave him four children. He went to work in the

Mitrovitsa Mines and then bad luck hit him; his house burned and with it his proof of American citizenship. All he had left was a lodge card. Then in an accident he blew off his left hand and had to learn to work in the mine offices and type with one hand. He spoke perfect American, slang and all and had had some time at college so he rose to be the manager's secretary. Then his wife died and war came. Two little farms he owned became worthless, troops driving off all the live stock. Now his children live with his wife's people and he was at least eating.

So many people talked to me who claimed to be Americans, going back to enjoy the fruits of American labor in Yugoslavia, only to have the holocaust of war sweep everything away. Yet somehow I could only feel sorry, not sympathetic. They only took from America, and gave nothing in return.

CHAPTER XXII

The next morning our travel was over almost immediately; for in an hour and a half we were striding into Berane.

It had been a pretty town with a great wide main street ending at the river's edge. A lovely old mosque reached its peculiar tower into the sky and the stores and shops still showed evidence of excellence although the succession of troops had bled them white of supplies.

Everything had to be purchased on the Black Market, the Partizans having made no attempt whatever at control, merely requisitioning what they wanted themselves. Apples were 70 cents to \$2.00 a kilo which is 2.2 lbs by our standard, bread \$1.00 a kilo, cream \$3.00 a kilo, and corn meal 65 cents; cigarettes were 85 cents to \$1.20 per package of 20, tobacco 80 cents to \$1.00 for a 50 gram package, milk 30 to 50 cents a liter which is a plump quart, matches 20 to 25 cents for a penny size box, meat \$1.30 a kilo, sour milk \$1.00 a kilo, wood \$16.00 a cord and wheat 75 cents a kilo. Any fancy groceries were out of sight, eggs being 15 cents a piece, jam \$1.30 a small jar, sardines \$1.20 a small can, soap really a luxury at \$1.00 to \$2.00 a bar and anchovies \$4.00 a small can. A sandwich, White Castle size was 60 cents and shoes could not be purchased.

The second day a fifteen year old Serbian came to us and said he'd like

to keep us in food and other needs for a slight commission and we hired him. It was a very fortunate move and for awhile Stephen was a splendid investment until he decided to really make money on us.

Natives would come in with all kinds of clothes, weapons, silver articles etc. until we had to have a guard posted to put a stop to this annoyance.

One of the sales persons was a little Turkish girl who said she was 15. She offered to buy for us from the Musselman population, which was quite large. This also seemed a good idea and she brought in sugar which was almost non-existent, eggs equally scarce and gibanitsas, a kind of doughnut which, after our long fast, tasted delicious.

One meal a day, at noon, we took at the brigade headquarters.

On first arrival a fine old regular major was in command and we were treated in a very friendly manner. A guard was established on our insistence to watch our property when we were out. We fed them when we ate, having made arrangements with the gazda or proprietor of our hotel (cafana), of which we had the second floor, to prepare what we were able to buy.

The girl of all work would clean our four rooms, make the beds and bring down hot milk which we would implement with gibanitsas or sausage sandwiches. At night we'd have more hot milk with a little bread and honey.

A person who has gone for some time without proper food appears always to relish talking about it. Our party would fasten on the pitifully small purchases brought in by Stephen and the little Turk in almost nauseating manner at times. In my own case, when I arrived home I still was forty pounds underweight and what I weighed when we got to Kelasin after the trek through the Sandzak, I wouldn't know.

We talked of mail. I had last heard from my wife in September and it was now February. Just before Christmas I had attempted to send a greeting via the small radio in Cvetic's headquarters to the Stab asking it be handed over to the Mission for transmission to Cairo, to Washington to Charlottesville. I could not know whether it had gone through or not or whether little gifts requested had been sent.

From early September until March 19th I could only wonder where my family was. That they were somewhere in America was a comforting thought, although my oldest youngster had been flying the Pacific since right after Pearl Harbor.

Somehow it is hard to realize children have grown up and at 18 are taking a man's part in an inhuman struggle. When I reached Cairo in March the sight of 135 letters plus my Christmas was overwhelming and for a day I pored through handwriting that seemed doubly dear to me, knowing the anguish and uncertainty that had attended the writing. Mine was a mild case however as Marke had been unable to write for two and a half years and in early 42 he had been reported killed to his parents in South Africa. Then after a six months period he had been able to get word out again to Cairo that he was alive and they had neglected to inform his folks for three more agonizing, heartbreaking months.

Ross had been taken prisoner in 40 and Australia was a terrible distance away. He had lived like an animal after escaping until barren necessity had permitted him to acquire the language.

Jack, who had fled to Palestine from Budapest with ^{his} ~~his~~ tiny two year old daughter, had been taken with his Royal Engineers detachment near Athens and only the fact that he was a ~~ixp~~ deep sea diver had permitted his Jewish body to remain intact. The Besche had used him on the most dangerous underwater repair work at Benghazi and Tobruk and finally, on his way from Athens to a liquidation center in Germany he had thrown himself off the train south of Belgrade after watching a guard hose the car he was riding in with machine gun fire. He had broken his left wrist and without medical attention it had knit almost at right angles but he had regained nearly full use of his hand. He had been so starved, beaten and overworked that he had no spirit left and we had to watch him like a hawk to prevent his consuming all our meager supplies on the trail. Time and again he would sneak into our food pack in the night, in spite of our surveillance and eat everything in it, when we were on starvation rations ourselves. Only the fact that he was a British soldier who had lived through literal hell kept us from shooting him or chasing him away as you would a marauding dog.

CHAPTER XXIII

The little people of the town and country came to see us; all terribly tired of war and its demands on their scanty means. Couldn't we do something to stop this crazy civil war, brother killing brother and sons their father? "Give us peace and the King or a republic like the Americans", they begged. "So few want this civil war and those few are drunk with power. We like Russia but we want to hold our land. There is no trouble with our sheep and cattle grazing. They have always clipped the grasslands in the high mountains together. Help us to have peace, each man in his own little house, able to watch his children grow up with their school a part of their life. The Pukevnik (colonel) knows that in the mountains our people are honest and strong. We live there as did the old Jews "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" but "fear God". When we go to the towns to live we become mad like the city people, speak falsely for gain. Politics are our undoing. Peace and roads, power from our mountain streams, people from the outside world to visit and broaden us and we could be great and of use to the world. We have been taught always to be generous with those we love, unyielding to those we hate but ever to strive for freedom."

We met a most interesting Swiss woman here in Berane the widow of a Serbian doctor, who had been a member of the International Red Cross during World War I. She spoke beautiful French and while desperately poor, managed to keep the two rooms remaining to her (the others having been requisitioned by the Partizans) immaculately clean and lovely. She still had a rather well stocked cellar with Italian vermouth, Dalmatian wines, French cider and champagne. Shortly after we arrived, the incumbent brigade was replaced and the newcomers seized her and forced her to reveal the hiding place of her wines. They then proceeded to steal the lot, some sixty bottles and drink it in a wild orgy that almost wrecked her house.

Another family, the head of which was a professor, had three daughters and a son. The eldest daughter had a beautiful, trained voice. She was impressed into service by this same new brigade and compelled to tour the countryside on foot, singing night after night. She was a rather frail creature and the exposure wrecked a voice that should have been preserved. The son was impressed into a labor battalion.

My barber was a King's man as was the village cap-maker and when they were incorporated into one of the two brigades formed in and around Berane, would pass me in drill with their tongues in their cheeks.

As one of them said "I am a Salonika veteran, but that was long ago,. Now, I am a member of the great Partizan army of Tito, but, they don't dare give me a gun, I know too well how to use it."

From the main stem of the town at the river, ran a street very different. Shops had open fronts like Cairo and the East. There were curious reefs and odd looking hardware. Turkey had not left this place until 1914. Across the river was Harem, where formerly lived the wives and concubines of the Turkish officials and garrison. A stronghold still graced a peak overlooking the town.

Winding along a raging creek, we passed a mill for the grinding of flour, and the blackened ruins of a Monastery destroyed by the Germans. And then on a flat plateau-like field overlooking the whole town, the adequate flying field built by the Italians and to the north a lovely old church, dating back hundreds of years belonging to the monastery below.

An elderly Pope still remained to tend ^{the} church although the partizans frowned on services. As he said "With the typhus there are so many to bury!"

The old chap nearly fell on my neck and brought out rakija for refreshment which he said was twenty years old. It must have been as it had a terrible wallop. Many years before he had been sent to the Serbian Mission in Chicago, and he spoke to me in a curious mixture of English, Italian and Serbian.

Peter Kemp, a fair-haired British Major, who had casually strolled hatless into the village one night from Albania, passing himself off as a newspaper correspondent, filled in the missing Italian links and we went to see the old boy again and again to our mutual enjoyment.

Peter had been a war correspondent during the trouble in Spain and had had one side of his face ~~xxxxxxx~~ damaged so severely by a bomb he had been held from entering the service for two years after the war began, until it had healed well enough for him to chew solid foods.

He was otherwise afflicted with that distinguished but painful hereditary malady of gout, which caught him about a week after his arrival and for eight or ten days immobilized him.

About the same time my hips and knees, long suffering from sleeping on a layer of straw in sub zero weather with only a ground sheet and a blanket for covering felt so much better in a reclining position, that I stayed in bed. The

greater part of the next ten days were spent in this manner getting caught up on a little reading and discussing with Peter whatever came to mind.

I read in rapid succession Edgar Wallace's "Book of All Power", Susan Ertz "Madam Claire", Tolstoy's "War and Peace", Andre Maurois "Arbel", and Kenneth Robert's "Cliver Wiswell, all in the library of an English speaking Greek girl used as an interpreter by the Partizans.

CHAPTER XXIV

An Italian came in daily to shave us, as our razor blades had long since gone to limbo and gradually other Italians dropped in to visit. One chap, from Florence was a sort of adjutant for the local Italian commander. He spoke fair French and fragmentary English and after a few trips offered the privilege of eating at the Italian Officer's mess. That of course we couldn't accept but looked on it only as an attempt to be friendly.

Next came Duccio Exdallin, former ski champion of Turin, Italy. He had been a member of the Alpini and before the war had spent some time in the States. His English was very good and he soon came to the point and said the three Italian Generals in Berane wished to meet us.

Marko and I finally met with General Uxilie. His quarters were just a short distance away in a charming house immediately across ~~from~~ from the former Italian headquarters. The house itself was peck marked with shell and grenade fragments and the headquarters and empty ruin.

We found the General a rather charming, educated professional biding his time to get back to Italy and his family and wanting most of all from us to make up a table of bridge. A Serbian engineer who had built the modern road from Lech through Andrijevica, Rodgerica and Cetinje to the Coast played with the General but Marko and I with Anglo-American luck, won the marbles. It was a hell of a way to fight a war, but a fair way to pass the time; and war has an ungodly amount of waiting in it, both for folks at home and the army at the front.

Knowing this chap had been in command of troops when Bailey and Lukacevic had negotiated their affiliation with the Chetnik forces I was curious to hear him explain how he now happened to be with the Partizans. It came out.

The Partizans in late October had simply attacked without warning and enemy sitting out the war. Some of the Italians had given a terrific account of themselves and 12 men had holed up in a concrete building near the headquarters and accounted for 150 Partizans before they were liquidated. The balance followed a new master.

Upon surrender the Italian soldiers, except for one battalion of fighters, became headquarters troops and road builders. Their radio station had connection with Italy and was retained, and, after a short period of trial handling the wire communications, the Partizans threw up their hands and had the Eyties reassume that burden.

Typhus had hit them terribly as their scanty diet was less than for the fighters who from childhood had been accustomed to slim rations. I had noticed in Africa and the Near East that the people ate a mere fraction of the amount of food necessary to keep English and Americans going. These people must be able to assimilate every last ounce of nourishment consumed.

Each morning gaunt, skeleton-like disordered masses of men in what had once been smart appearing uniforms moved north out of town to return in the afternoon staggering under the load of a fair-sized sapling hacked off its frozen base, their work for the day.

Three hundred Italian soldiers and eight officers fell victim of typhus at one time and the peasants, unable to command the services of the one doctor left to practice without medicants and a stripped hospital, died with appalling regularity. Diphtheria added its gain to the heavy toll.

Helt Green and the two American aviators arrived about the 9th of Feb. The officer, Lt. Stanley Grzesik was a bombardier and the enlisted man, Testi, a radio sergeant. In their first run over Mostar they had been hit and these two bailed out at about 5000 ft., getting as far as they could from the Germans before letting go. They had come down, Grzesik with the Partizans and Testi with the Chetniks, who started him towards the Partizans the following morning.

Testi was taken ill with jaundice immediately after arriving at Berane and had a wretched time of it as our diet was not exactly fit for the sick.

Grzesik was happy because he had learned his first day in the country that Serbian resembled his father's Polish language in many ways. By the time he reached us he was doing a fine job of getting by and in fact was becoming fluent. He remained in the country helping the British Mission long after the rest of us were evacuated.

Helt Green was a Southern gentleman without a streak of meanness in him. He had a brilliant mind as was evidenced by his creating a very successful textile business in his ten years after college before we were at war. He had infinite patience, dogged perseverance and a swell sense of humor. He was sent to us to remain until evacuation was effected, both of our party and the wounded who could not be properly treated or moved in case the Germans attacked the town of Berane in force.

Our immediate concern after arrival was of course the air field. The Italians had used it but exact measurements and description would probably be required by the R.A.F. whose standard operating procedure was to drop a pilot on any field and case it thoroughly before landing ships.

We found the field broad and long and beautifully drained., with a perfect approach and a fairly tricky takeoff one way and perfect the other. We felt we had every reason to be optimistic these first few days in February. They passed however without event.

I was becoming very impatient to get out. My knowledge was getting stale by the minute. I felt like a substitute on the sidelines at the big football game.

Much later I was to learn that Hunter, in his desire to impress Dapcevic and concur with his request, planned a sortie to take off all the badly wounded (approximately 65) when we left and that meant more planes ~~than~~ than could be handled except under the most perfect conditions. It also meant delay.

February 5th sixteen inches of snow fell, and the field lay white and forbidding.

On the 4th the brigade, quartered in the town, had moved out and the one coming in made their presence felt immediately. The Major in command was a rather, handsome, affected individual who felt himself God's gift to women and the world, while the Kommissar affected a shaven skull and sweeping mustaches and continued questions as to our being of the great proletariat. The answer we gave of being English and American could not penetrate his thick skull and we wondered at times whether or not we had dreamed up the broad rolling expanse of America.

The first clash came over the airfield. The Major said the snow was of no importance. However Marko brought out the fact that our people would not risk even a single plane on his opinion and the field would have to be cleared. He told us then to mind our own business so we called Dapcevic, who immediately instructed the dear fellow to clear the field within twenty four hours.

The job was a tough one but there were horses in plenty and we even knocked together one snow plow to accomplish a smooth quick job. It was no good to the Major who refused to use it, and instead impressed 1600 males from the town with shovels and for three days his soldiers drove the half starved wretches day and night until the field was cleared.

Entertainments began to be held nightly and some were quite good. However all people over fifteen were compelled to attend and a dreadful two hours was taken up with pure propaganda with our Kommissar impressing on the villagers that the Partizans and Russia were the only fighting forces against the Fascists, that Mihailovic was a traitor and collaborator and that Tite himself was holding more divisions and doing more fighting than the Allies had accomplished in Italy. With my knowledge that twenty German divisions were being contained in Serbia alone, far from the haunts of Tite, while eight divisions only graced the operative area of the Partizans, and when I thought of the incredible hardships of the slow sure advance in Italy I was sickened and went no more.

The drafting of two new brigades now took place with fully half of the impressed personnel nonsympathetic. Girls who would not join were given the most menial tasks of washing the clothes of the soldiers, scrubbing the floors of all buildings used by troops and even cleaning the outhouses used so carelessly by them. After a few weeks most of them joined.

Our climax came on the second Sunday. A most un-Sabbath like din at the rear, upon investigation, revealed the guard refusing to permit our little Serb waitress to enter with our breakfast and he informed us no one would enter our quarters without written approval of the brigade commander.

Being righteously angry as well as damnably hungry, we threw the strazar down the top half flight of steps and he jacked a shell into his gun, ejecting one already in the barrel. He wisely didn't point it at us as I had the mouth of my Colt trained on his stupid face. Marko instructed him to go back to headquarters and get his orders right and leave a substitute. One of the soldiers in the courtyard, a friendly fellow left behind by the old brigade, immediately came up and took his post and all went well until the maid came down some fifteen minutes later to clean our rooms. More noise and we went out to find the original sentry returned and up to his old tricks again.

This time we wasted no argument, for the simple ass made the mistake of pointing his weapon at Marko. We disarmed him, I kicked him down the two half flights of stairs and told him if he showed his filthy face around there again I'd kick his teeth in. He didn't call my bluff.

A few minutes later Ross, whom we had sent to the headquarters after the first incident returned having passed the sentry on the way. The Major had assured him the sentry had been given positive orders not to interfere with us.

Next we saw the Komisar passing by on his way to Green's quarters down the street and a few minutes later Holt appeared, bewilderedly asking what it was all about. We told him and instructed him to ask the Major and the Komisar to address their remarks to us, not to a junior officer.

After several hours the Komisar appeared with a guard of at least a dozen huge men. We beat him to a harrangue by instructing him to remove his guard, to see that we were not molested further, that we would see whom we pleased where we pleased and as we pleased and in the future would be armed at all times and ready and able to protect ourselves from insult. And that was all, he could now go. Which he did. Marko told me later in London that Tito made an issue of the matter and he was ordered to apologize to Dapcevic. Knowing Marko, I'll bet the apology was a masterpiece if you counted his English "asides".

The middle of the week Dapcevic came over bringing Hunter and a huge retinue to swear in the two new brigades. The band from Andrijevica came and there was a triumphal parade, a great entertainment and a dance. I saw for the first time

the Montenegrin type of dancing which is like the Russian dance except from the position with the fanny close to the floor and feet alternately kicking forward, the Montenegrin leaps high in the air in an incredible maneuver. It is not too graceful but very highly athletic. They also danced the Kolo which is the folk dance of all Yugoslavia, apparently; and a curious couple dance very similar to the Viennese waltz.

The more I saw of Dapcevic the better I liked him. He spoke the language of a soldier and had fought the Germans with telling effect. He undoubtedly spent considerable time discussing and furthering post war politics but never with me after our first interview and this in itself was a relief, because no matter where I had been, with the Chetniks or with the Partizans the discussion of politics seemed to be of paramount interest. Mihailovic, Racic, Kalabic and Vuckovic of the Chetniks and Dapcevic of the Partizans stand out in bright array to me because with them I could talk of destroying Germans which was the only purpose ~~of~~ which in my opinion, a man should dedicate himself at this time.

I asked ~~me~~ him many questions about Tite, whom he had not seen for a long time, and from his answers I felt that with Dapcevic, while an intense loyalty to Tite was apparent, the thing that made him tick was a mingled patriotism for the country and genuine love of fighting.

At the banquet Marke and I ~~were~~ were seated on either side of him and the episode of the airfield and the sentry came up. Dapcevic said of course the thing that had stirred up the brigade was the disarming of the sentry but that he would see that we weren't disturbed further. And we weren't. In the next several days the brigade was sent north and a new outfit came in, commanded by another old regular who was most friendly and considerate.

I was genuinely sorry to part with Dapcevic the next day after the banquet, when he returned to Kelasin.

Lt. Grzesik was assigned the job of overseeing the air field, placing wood for fires in event a night sortie should come; and arranging warehousing space for storing and the distribution of supplies to the Partizans.

The Italian radio station dispatched to Kelasin each morning meteorological data for redispaching to Italy, and, as the moon period came on, we began to be hopeful again. However it always seemed that good weather at Berane would not correspond to the weather at Kelasin, or vice versa, and apparently the weather in Italy was abominable.

On the third of March at about 1300 we heard planes and rushing to the street saw two Liberators and four Savoies circling the town while upstairs two fighters darted back and forth. It was a beautiful day and as they circled again and again we rushed around gathering together our belongings and ran the half or three quarters of a mile to the field; almost indifferent to the many live mortar bombs still lying carelessly around from the fighting the previous October.

From the Liberators multicolored package parachutes began to blossom, we counted 36 and when they had finished the Savoies began unloading dead weight packages of what turned out to be ~~xxx~~ salt, beans, shoes and clothing; which, responding to the inevitable law of gravity rained down in the river and through the tile roofs, bursting, naturally, upon impact to the disappointment and profane acknowledgement of the population, civil and military.

More circling and after almost a solid hour off they went, leaving us astonished, astounded and angry enough to draw and quarter them.

Back to Hotel America, as we had named it, to find our rooms looted of everything we had left behind. Marko was particularly hard hit as he had simply walked away from the place. Stephen and the little Turkish girl had a field day replenishing toiletries.

We felt the planes might return that night and slept with our clothes on without unpacking. About three in the morning those of us who hated to sleep another night in the dam place gave up. I'd have given a lot for a couple of quarts of Bourbon.

The chuted goods turned out to be dehydrated foods and medical supplies and for the next few days the Partizan cooks were attempting to learn the mysteries

of the dehydrated milk, potatoes, etc. undoubtedly intended for the hospital.

A happy event occurred several days later. A young Texan First Lt. and four enlisted men from a bomber group hit over Regensburg, Germany arrived, footsore but very happy. Five of the crew had bailed out over south Germany when two motors had conked out but these chaps had stayed with it, bailing out only when the gas ran out; the pilot, last to leave, saw the plane crash head on into Mt. Dormitor as he was airborne.

Mt. Dormitor is the highest mountain in Montenegro being well over 8200 ft. and from the height at which the men left the ship wind currents plus time of departure spread them far and wide over the countryside. However within two days all had assembled together and were in the friendly hands of the Partizans, who brought them on to Kelasin and Berane. Their main hardship resulted from the fact they were in cottons with thin electrically heated flying suits and boots and one chap had the misfortune to land in a tree, tearing his suit to pieces in the branches.

One American woman in the town, born Rosie ---- in Wyoming, I believe, entertained the crowd quite frequently. She had been brought to Niksic when about 14 and her father had died leaving the family more or less stranded in the country. Rosie had married at fifteen a quite successful storekeeper in Berane and they had prospered and raised a family of four, two boys and two girls. Then the Italians had come and Steve, the husband, had taken to the mountains.

All but native ~~xxxxx~~ wearing apparel had been looted by the Italians, and the store closed. However, enough remained to keep the family from want.

In October of '43 the Germans bombed the town after the Partizans took it from the Italians and Steve's sister was killed. Rosie's youngest daughter, a pretty little thing of five, was hit in the head by a bomb fragment, and after several months the wound healed but left her with terrible headaches. The whole family wanted to leave for any place away from Berane and Steve most of all. I believe he felt certain up until the time our planes were airborne he would somehow be able to stow away. The fate of his family did not appear to weigh heavily on him and the war, to him, simply denied him the means ~~xx~~ of making money.

General Oxillio kept me informed daily of the weather reports from Italy. We saw quite a lot of Exdallin, also, who liked to speak of his visits to Lake Placid and hoped to be able to see America again some day when things were cleaned up in his own

country. His remarks on Il Duce were vivid and unprintable. He would say "Look you, I am a soldier. I shave in the morning to appear clean and fit for the day. Il Duce shaves at night and my father always said a soldier who shaves at night is better in bed than in battle."

On March 14th Hunter phoned that planes were laid on for the following day and Oxilie and his adjutant; Marke, Kemp and I would board them and fill the planes with the more desperate cases of the wounded. We didn't believe in Santa Claus any more but waited the morrow with interest.

At 1400 on the 15th two Savoies accompanied by fighters, hove into sight and landed without fuss or feathers.

With General Oxilie I boarded one plane, leaving Marke and Kemp to come in the other, said goodbye to the villagers and the Americans and English who were due out on the next sortie, waited while the Italians and Partizans nearly came to blows on what wounded should be taken, finally winding up as far as our plane was concerned with ten remarkable healthy looking specimens, one of whom, a girl, turned out to be the mistress of one of the Partizans in Italy, and at 1730 we were in the air, to put down in Lecce at the heel of Italy at 1910.

As we passed the great peak of Dormitor flying high in the intense cold, which I had rather made myself susceptible to by giving my flying jacket to a Partizan with an upper jaw injury shivering in a thin coat, and proceeded out over the Adriatic, my mind flashed back to the one incident which will always have a great meaning to me.

The Minister had expressed a desire just before I left him to do something to honor America, saying "Here, we have Slave the day of our patron saint!" "What is America's Slave?"

I thought for a moment and said "We have four great days, Christmas, New Years, Independence Day and Thanksgiving. Christmas we love because that is the day of Christ. New Year's, we enjoy, because we look with hope to it but on its Eve we celebrate, sometimes not wisely but too well and often the Day itself finds us with aching heads. Independence Day would be a wonderful day except for the sadness of sacrifice and mourning that sweeps the South from the Lost Cause of our Civil War. Thanksgiving Day is our Day, our day of Slava, because that day we give thanks to God for our founding Fathers and the beginning of our country and freedom.

Mihailovic replied "Good, we would honor America and on the eve of that

day each mountaintop of Serbia will have a fire lighted by our peasants."

On Thanksgiving Eve, three Americans standing in a tiny village high in the Serbian Mountains saw a huge fiery A come into being. Then, one ~~after another~~ after another fires appeared until eleven peaks were outlined. A Tribute to America.

The End.